

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL GROWTH OF JAINISM IN RELATION TO SAIVISM

(With special reference to the bhakti movement)

PART A

The consolidation of the Pallava dynasty marks a new chapter in the socio-religious history of the Tamil land. Like any dynasty in ancient India, they too encountered a heterogenous cultural scenario in their domain. Hence with a brief account about the early Pallava religious history, this chapter will trace at length the Pallava encounter with Jainism and the latter's progress. Further it will trace the rise of the *bhakti* movement and its repercussions on all the major institutions of the land such as economy, society, religion and culture. The movement started initially as an expression of the personal divine experience of the individuals and later on became a mass movement. Though, it cannot be denied that *bhakti* witnessed the clash of interests of Śaivism and Vaishnavism on one hand and Jainism and Buddhism on the other, it nevertheless paved the way for mutual assimilation of ideas and gave an impetus to the development of art and architecture. The notable feature of the *bhakti* had been the relationship that existed between the divergent sects of Jainism and Śaivism. The former receded to the backstage for a brief period, but reasserted itself with distinguishable changes such as image worship from the late 7th century onwards.

The research chapter has been divided according to the major changes noted during the course of its existence under the Pallavas. Hence for a clearer understanding of the major events in its course, the period has been divided on the basis of major Pallava rulers.

2.1 A Religious framework of the Pallavas

The Pallavas had begun their career under the Satavahanas and many of their institutions were structured on the lines of the latter. The Satavahanas much before the rise of the Guptas, had laid the foundation for the growth of brahmanical religion and also promoted the growth of Buddhist and Jain institutions some of which are seen at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Guntapalli.

The early Pallavas had been followers of the Vedic religion, which is affirmed by their numerous inscriptions in which they proclaim their brahmanical lineage and adherence to *Viṣṇu*, *Brahmā*, *Brahaṣpati*, *Samyu*, *Drōṇa* and *Aśvattāman*. Their brahmanical lineage is further illustrated by the symbol of the bull (according to the Hindu mythology the *vāhana* of Siva) as their royal insignia and the *Khatvāṅga* (club) for their banner¹.

The numerous inscriptions of the early Pallavas provide invaluable insights about their religious inclination. They also suggest the structuring of the economy and religion, during the period, through the medium of land grants to *brāhmanas* (*brahmedaya*) and to the temples (*devabhōga*). The Maidavōlu², the Ōmgōdu³, the Vēsanta⁴ and the Māṅgalur⁵ plate record *devabhōga* and *brahmedaya* grants. Similar documentation of land grants to the Nārāyana temple at Dālura and Maharaja temple are made in the Gunapadeya⁶ and Uruvappalli⁷ plates. The income generated through the land grants was used for conducting rituals and for meeting other expenditures of the temple. Apart from land grants, provisions in kind were also made to temples. In support of these are numerous inscriptions such as the Machikallu⁸ plates, which record provision of carpets and necessities, made to the Jivaśivaśvāmi temple. There are also supportive evidences like the Ōmgōdu plates to indicate *brahmedaya* to scholars well versed in Vedas⁹.

Despite numerous epigraphic references about the existence of temples there are no evidences about the structures or the divinities enshrined therein. This is probably because in South India in the earlier phase, stone was not a popular building material among the brahmanical sects for the construction of temples or for fashioning the image of divinities, as it was generally associated with memorials¹⁰. As such these early temples were most probably built of bricks, and the deities were either painted on walls or carved in wood, which with the passage of time has been completely lost. The only surviving example of the early images is the *liṅga* enshrined within the Parasuramesvara temple at Gudimallam¹¹. Though no inscription has been found from the place to assign it to any particular dynasty or a ruler, the *liṅga* based on its stratigraphic find is dated to the 1st century BC and the *garbha-griha* to the 1st- 2nd century AD¹². The *liṅga*, with its frontal face representing the *Rigvedic Rudra Yajamāna* stands on a *Bhuta* and carries the dead *yajña paśu*¹³. The *Rudra* carries an *ajya-pātra* in its left hand and a *danda-paraśu* rests on his shoulder. The site has yielded remains of sacrificial animals suggesting early form of sacrificial worship and it is only from the 8th century AD with the introduction of *āgamic* worship that provisions were made for *abhishēka* at the shrine¹⁴. Though there are no substantiative evidences to prove royal patronage to the *Parasurāmeshvara* temple in its early days, the shrine nevertheless would have had a strong bearing on the Pallavas as the region lay within the territory that formed a part of the early Pallava homeland.

From the above archaeological and epigraphical evidences it is inferred that the Pallavas were undoubtedly related to the Vedic-brahmanical religion since very early times. They thus played an effective role in the dissemination of brahmanical cults into Tondaimandalam and southwards¹⁵. Kanchipuram was a renowned centre for Vedic learning wherein flourished a Vedic University known

as the *ghaṭika*¹⁶. The *ghaṭika*, according to the Velurpalayam plates of Nandivarman III, was patronised by the Pallavas since the time of Skandasisya in the 3rd century AD¹⁷. Kakusthavarman (c.405 AD - 430 AD) the founder of the Kadamba dynasty is stated to have visited the *ghaṭika* along with his *guru* Viravarman to pursue Vedic studies¹⁸.

Kanchipuram, alongside Vedic learning, was also the seat of Jaina and Buddhist scholarship. Scholars such as Acharya Samantabhadra visited Kanchipuram during the 2nd century AD to take part in religious discourses and debates¹⁹. Aryadeva a Ceylonese philosopher of the Madhyamika School of Buddhism, Buddhagosa from Magadha et al stayed and imparted their philosophies at the Buddhist monastery in Kanchipuram²⁰. Archaeological excavations from Kanchi brought to light Buddhist *vihāras*, *stūpas* and cult objects such as Buddha *pādas*, metal images et al²¹. Hence all the above discussed factors would suggest that Kanchipuram, the seat of Pallava authority since the early centuries of the Christian era, was home to a multitude of religious adherents.

2.2.A Jainism in Tondaimandalam

In the background of the above multi-cultural and religious scenario, the research focuses on the position of Jainism in the Pallava domain. The geographical proximity of Tondaimandalam with Karnataka on the western side and Andhra in the east facilitated the spread of Jainism.

Tondaimandalam with its small-ridged hillocks and natural caverns also provided a suitable habitation for the Jaina monks who found these to be ideal locations to carry on their religious activities unhindered. Few such sites that existed prior to the Pallavas have been described in the following paragraphs as to

substantiate the theory about Jaina proliferation in the region in the early centuries of the Christian era.

One of the earliest Jain sites in Tondaimandalam is Mamandur. Located very near Kanchipuram there is a range of low lying hillocks and towards its extreme west is a natural cavern formed by two boulders leaning one over the other. The overhanging boulder has a shallow drip line. On the cliff of this boulder is a Tamil-Brahmi inscription, which on the basis of palaeography is dated to the 3rd-4th century AD²². It records the gift of a stone bed by Kaniman, a local chieftain eulogised as the conqueror of Tēnur. The name of the stone mason is mentioned as Calavan. The stone-bed measures 155 cm in length. The place must have been a prominent centre for the Jaina adherents to merit donation from a chieftain.

The other important site to preserve Jaina remnants dating to 3rd-4th century AD comes from Tondūr near Gingee in Villuppuram district. Topographically the place consists of fields and hillocks. The hillocks rise to a height of 300 metres above ground level and are locally named as *Panchanampādi*. It is a conglomeration of boulders, which form into numerous natural caverns and shelters, that was found suitable by the Jaina monks to lead a life of seclusion. One such cavern, on the eastern face of the hillock has a huge natural cavern. At the entrance to this cavern on the sloppy rock floor is a Tamil-Brahmi inscription that has been, on the basis of palaeography dated to the 3rd-4th century AD²³. The inscription records that at the instruction of Elankayipan the villagers of Akalūr (modern Agalur) made provision for chiseling three stone beds. The name of the mason who executed the grant is given as Moci. An exceptional feature of this inscription is the indication of numeral 'three' by three parallel strokes²⁴. This refers to the three stone beds with pillow lofts that are chiselled towards the south-east of the inscription. These stone beds have an average measurement of 168 cm in length and 67 cm in width.

Elankiyapan of the inscription has been identified as a reputed monk²⁵. This identification does not go in accordance with the Jaina tenants that forbids any monk to command or crave for any object of comfort from the lay adherents. Elankiyapan was in all probability a chieftain, who could command his subjects to grant provisions, in this case, for the Jaina monks. It is interesting to note that the villagers of Agalur made donations for the Jaina monks at Tondur indicating that both the places had a considerable number of Jain adherents. Agalur even to the present day has a considerable number of Jain families, their temple and has yielded inscriptions datable to the 7th-8th centuries AD.

All the above suggests the extent of Jaina infiltration and influence over Tondaimandalam and its environs since very early times. In its early phase, though it received patronage from the minor chieftains, Jainism nevertheless maintained a policy of non-interference in the politics of the region.

2.2.1.A Jainism in Tondaimandalam (upto Simhavarman III)

etal

Jainism had mainly confined itself to unostentatious natural settings and had by then succeeded in winning a substantial number of lay followers. This scenario continues till about the 5th century AD when drastic changes are noticed in their organisational set up. This was an attempt to streamline the Jain monastic groups and lay followers.

In conformity to the above changes, for the first time there is evidence to a full-fledged monastery that functioned at Patalika. This is inferred from the Jaina manuscript *Lokavibhāga*, the first known work on the science of cosmography from Tamil land. Simhasuri originally composed the manuscript in Prakrit²⁶, but was translated to Sanskrit by Sarvanandin in *saka* 380 during the 22nd year of the reign of Pallava king Simhavarman II²⁷. Pātalika is identified with Pātaliputram or

Tirupatiripuliyur in modern Cuddalore district²⁸. According to an inscription recorded from Sravanabelagola, the Jain Acharya Samanthabhadra is said to have visited the Pataliputra monastery²⁹.

Two significant points are notable from the manuscript: first, this is the earliest authentic and precise evidence to enlist the contribution of the Jains to the field of literature, science and cosmography during the 5th century AD. Secondly, the use of Sanskrit would suggest its acceptance as a legitimising language through which the Jains aimed at forging a common platform with the Vedic religion. The manuscript is also valuable for fixing the year of reign of Simhavarman II, thus providing a chronological datum for the early Pallavas. Third, the visit by Samantabhadra from Karnataka indicates that Patalika was a prominent centre for Jaina learning and was pivotal for the spread of Jaina doctrines.

The establishment of the Dravida Saṅgha in 470 AD at Madurai by Vajranandi, the pupil of Puṣyapada³⁰ furthered the cause of Jainism. The *Dravida Saṅgha* with its four main divisions of *Nandi-gaṇam*, *Sena-gaṇam*, *Simha-gaṇam* and *Deva-gaṇam*³¹ was an instrument of acculturation and was largely responsible for the spread of Jainism in the Tamil region. Thus all the above factors would suggest that Jainism had by 5th century AD succeeded in emerging as a successful pursuance, with adherents drawn from all sections of the society.

2.2.2.A Pallavas and their relation with Jainism (from Simhavarman III)

The reign of Simhavarman III witnessed a surge in the activities of the Jains. The influence of the Jains in Kanchipuram and its environs is indicated by the royal grants and flourishing monasteries near the Pallava capital. Their popularity was sequel to the patronage they received from the royal houses, particularly because of the queen of Simhavarman III. She belonged to the royal

family of the Gangas, who are notable among the south Indian dynasties to champion the cause of Jainism.

The earliest indication of the support extended by the Pallavas under Simhavarman III to Jains is noted in the Pallankoil copper plates, which gets its name after the village in Tanjore from where it was recovered. A bi-lingual grant, it is written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil. The Sanskrit *praśasti* of the grant presents the rhetoric of a divine, imperial dynasty and the Tamil portion furnishes details about specific land arrangements for the named groups of people³² and their religious institutions. As the grant is being made to a Jaina shrine, the first part of the plates carry the umbrella symbol with a fly-whisk (*chauri*) on either side. The umbrella (*Mukkudai*) is the sacred symbol of the Jains and is associated with the Tīrthaṅkaras. The inscription opens with salutations to the Holy Arhat Jinēndra:

Verse 1. Svarggy-apāva [r] gga pragunagrama-
taj=jīnēndrah [I*] munīndra devendra na-
brinda-vandyāh || ...³³

According to the inscription, the composer of the *praśasti* is Medhavin who is described as well versed in all the *sāśtras* and is compared with Brihaspati in intelligence. The second part of the inscription is written in Tamil language and records the grant of the village Amanserkai in Perunagarnadu a subdivision of Venkunrakottam, as *pallichchandam* to the Jain teacher Vajranandi of Paruttikunram. Paruttikunram has been acclaimed as the holy place of Lord Varadhamana, a reference to the Mahavira temple that existed there in.

The inscription is a clear indication about the existence of a congregation of Jaina monks belonging to the Nandi Saṅgha at Parruttikunram. The fact that the grant was made to Vajranandi acknowledges his important role within the Jaina organisation and was in all probability the leader of monks. The village Amanserkai has been named as Sramanasrama in Sanskrit, suggesting a place for the Sramanas or the Jains. The inscription is also very useful in demarcating the political and geographical extent of the village. It also provides interesting information about the conversion of a land into a *pallichchandam* or tax-free land village by demarcating it after an elaborate survey by planting milk bush and placing boundary stones. The land grant included wet lands, dry lands, saline or *Kalar* land, the wasteland, forest, wells, houses and house gardens. The second part of the plate's also record the *pallichchandam* grant of sixteen *patti* of land in the village of Tāmar to the Jaina monk Vajranandi from Tiruparruttikunram³⁴.

Paruttikunru has been identified with modern Tiruparruttikunram or *Jina Kanchi* near Kanchipuram. This place houses two temples one for Tīrthaṅkara Mahavira and another for Chandraprabha. Based upon the evidences from the Pallankoil grant about the existence of a Nandi Saṅgha at Varadhamaneesvara dharmathirtha or the holy place of Varadhamana, the antiquity of Mahavira temple is traced back to the 5th-6th centuries AD. This is also the earliest document to record the change in status of the then existing village into a *pallichchandam* land. This provision increased the hold over the land by the religious institutions concerned whereby all produce of the land was used for religious or charitable purposes³⁵. Another equally significant point to be noted here is that it is the earliest known copper plate grant to a Jaina institution by Simhavarman III, attesting to the popularity of Jainism in the area because till then the Pallavas were concentrating on donations to the brahmanical temples and institutions.

The Pallavas and the members of the royalty made similar grants to Jaina institutions elsewhere. This gave a fillip to the material and moral support to the Jains. This is further corroborated by the Hosekotte plates of the Ganga King Avinita alias Konganyadhiraja (c 530-600 AD)³⁶, a Sanskrit copper plate grant that was issued during the twelfth year of the reign (542 AD) of Ganga king Avinita. It states that the engraver of the grant was Perera from Kuvalala. The purpose of the plate is to record the gift of the village of *Pulli-ura* in the *Korikonda* division as *pallichchandam* to the Arhat temple by the mother of Pallavathiraja Simhavishnu (the queen of Simhavarman III). According to the inscription, the temple was patronised by the monks of Yavanika or the Yapaniya Sangha. The grant consisted of wet agricultural and forest lands and included a house that was probably meant for the stay of the Jaina laity.

The *Yāpanīyas* a branch of the Jains were an exclusive product of Karnataka Jainism and on the basis of their numerous inscriptions are said to have flourished from the 5th-14th century A.D.³⁷. The *Yāpanīyas* were a sect of Jains, which attempted to strike a compromise between the Śvētambaras and the Digambaras, hence advocated that women can attain salvation, and popularised the cult of *yakshi* and *yaksha*³⁸. It is to be noted here that the Pallavas had maintained close political relations with the Gangas. The latter are noted for their Jain origin as their empire was founded on the instructions of the Jaina monk Simhanandi. In these circumstances, the Pallavas were reconciled to the influence of Jainism since very early times mainly because of their geographical and political proximity with the Gangas. That the Pallava queen was able to, first, make land donations within Ganga territory and second, to record it on the copper plate, itself are clear indication about the Ganga origin of the Queen and her Jain affiliation. She, by the

grant succeeded in introducing the brahmanical Pallava monarchy to Jainism thus paving the way for religious catholicity in the Pallava domain.

The land grants accelerated the prosperity of Jaina monastic organisations thus making them powerful economic and social groups. Moreover through the copper plate grants, the monastic institutions received direct royal patronage. These monastic groups maintained a network of links and control over a larger geographical area, which was necessary to build a political and social base. A significant factor was the active participation of the Jains in the welfare of their respective religious institutions. They had succeeded in commanding state support through the medium of land grants which was initially the prerogative of the brahmanical religion, through the institutions of *devābhōga* and *brahmedaya*.

Similar conditions would have prevailed even during the reign of Simhavishnu, the son and successor of Simhavarman III. As for his personal religion, the Udayendiram plates of Nandivarman II refer to him reverentially as *Bhaktyarādita-vishnu-simha-Vishnu*, a title that would identify him to be a Vaishnava³⁹. These are some substantial evidences to suggest the religious catholicity of the early Pallava rulers where religion was the sole prerogative of the individual's choice.

There are, at the same time evidences about Jains from places such as Parayanpattu (*PLATE I*) and Tirunatharkunrru that would suggest the extent of proliferation of Jaina practices and their philosophy over Tondaimandalam during the 5th-6th century AD. Parayanpattu is located 32 km north of Gingee in Villupuram district. The village could be approached from Kapalampadi. Therein at the village is a chain of low lying hillocks, which the villagers refer to vol.XLI as *Sunaipārai* or rock with natural springs after the natural pond found at

the foothill. Atop the hillock on a flat rock surface is a five-line inscription engraved in the *Vatelluttu* script and Tamil language⁴⁰. The inscription commencing with the salutation *Nammōtu*, records that Aradhan, the disciple of Vajranandi from Pananadu fasted unto death at the place. On the basis of palaeography the inscription has been dated to the 5th –6th Centuries AD⁴¹.

This is the earliest recorded document in Tondaimandalam to furnish information regarding *sallekhanā* by a Jaina monk. *Sallekhanā* is a practice unique only to Jainism and this involves encountering death voluntarily when one is nearing his or her end and realises that leading a normal life according to the Jaina tenets is no longer possible. Tukol has described this as “ a state attainable only after the subjugation of all passions and worldly attachments by observance of austerities and gradually abstaining from food and water and by simultaneous meditation on the real nature of the self until the soul parts from the body”⁴². The intention of the person undertaking this vow is his or her spiritual liberation from the bondage of *Karma* – the source of all ills in the world and this vow was to be adopted only with the consent of the spiritual master or *guru*⁴³.

The hillock at Parayanpattu served as an ideal location where the monk Aradhan could, in loneliness, contemplate on pure thoughts and slowly free himself from the world. Pananadu, comprising parts of modern Cuddalore and Villupuram districts was ruled by the Bana Chieftains (c.A.D. 350 – c.895) who owed their allegiance to the Pallavas⁴⁴. Since the 5th–6th century AD this territory has been a host to the Jains and their activities. Panarashtra housed the famous Pataliputiram Jain monastery that has been described in the context of Simhavarman II. Vajranandi, the illustrious Jain teacher referred to in the Parayanpattu inscription, would have belonged to the famous monastery at Pataliputiram.

Another notable site to have yielded Jaina vestiges dating to the 5th-6th centuries AD is Tirunatharkunru otherwise known as Sirukadambur, which lies three kilometres north of Gingee. On the northern periphery of the sparsely populated village is a hillock after which the village gets its name. It stands 200 meter high above ground level and carries large rock boulders that form natural caverns. Stone cut steps, which are at present lying in a dilapidated state, lead one to the top of the hillock which was once home to the Jaina ascetics since early times. It continued to be so even as late as the 9th-10th century AD as documented by the inscription and the sculptural art executed on granite boulders. The earliest inscription from the site is a brief Tamil-Brahmi record, which on the basis of palaeography has been dated to the 5th-6th century AD⁴⁵. Similar to Parayanpattu, it records *Sallekhanā* by the ascetic Chandranandi. The monk is said to have abstained from food and water for a period of fifty-seven days and finally attained *moksha*. The above inscription is perhaps the earliest and only known one from Tondaimandalam to record the exceptionally long period of fasting by the monk.

These are some of the sites to have yielded references about the Jaina settlements and a clear indication about the spread of Jaina ideals in Tondaimandalam. Sociologically it can be inferred that these ideals would have had a strong bearing on the life and thought of the inhabitants of the land.

The influence of Jainism in Tondaimandalam had continued for a much longer time but the region had not yielded any datable vestiges of Jainism after the aforesaid evidences. This was noticeable till about the reign of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla in the first half of the 8th century AD. Hence, this phase prior to Nandivarman II is considered as a period of great change due to renewed attempts at the spread of Brahmanical socio-cultural systems⁴⁶. Hence it is necessary to trace the reasons for the arrested growth of Jainism in the course of its history in

Tondaimandalam and in Tamil country as a whole. This was particularly noticeable as it coincided with the rise of the *bhakti* movement.

2.3.A The Bhakti Movement

The origin of the *bhakti* movement is generally considered to be from the middle of the 6th century AD⁴⁷. This resulted in the socio-cultural metamorphosis in the Tamil land. The movement marked the growth of an intensive theism where there was intense devotion to a personal god and this found a profound expression in the hymns of the *bhakti* proponents⁴⁸. Hence *bhakti* with all its elements of dissent, protest and reform is considered as a reform aimed at the establishment of the classical Hindu society in early medieval Tamil land⁴⁹.

2.3.1.A The concept of Bhakti

The *Bhakti* as a phenomenon was present in the early Tamil literature produced during the Caṅkam period. There are passages in the *Tolkāppiyam* such as *Kaṁap pakuti kaṭavulum varaiyar*⁵⁰ which express the individual's emotional longing and this sentiment was later on adopted by the *bhakti* saints to express their devotion to God. The two main subjects of *Tolkāppiyam* are *akattinai* and *purattinai*, which deals with the interior and exterior aspects of life respectively⁵¹. In *akattinai*, the concept of love is discussed with union, separation, variance, waiting, pity, and one-sided unreciprocated love⁵². The notion of sacred space/locale, the notion of hero-god and the notion of grace that constitute the essence of the *bhakti* are also very strongly present in the ancient Tamil literature⁵³. The notion of a sacred space or locale in relation to a deity is for the first time seen in the *Tirumurukarruppadaḥ* of Nakkīrar⁵⁴. *Tirumurukarruppadaḥ* is a part of the twelve *Tirumurai* or sacred collections of the Tamil Śaiva tradition where the poet describes specific locales where the

bhakta encounter with his divine. Therein Nakkiran has sung in praise of Murukan with a description of all places and events associated with the Murukan such as Tirupparankundram, Tirucendur, Palani et al and thus create awareness among the people of the sacred specific sacred localities⁵⁵. Similar concept is seen in the *Paripāṭal*, which introduces the idea of a universal godhead, temple and abode of *Māl/Māyōṇ/Visnu* and *Muruka*⁵⁶. *Paripāṭal* provide evidence of Vedic, Upanisadic and Puranic influence and reveal the culmination of the devotional themes with the *akam* (interior/love) and *puram* (exterior/war) themes of the Caṅkam works⁵⁷. The early Tamils were exposed to such *nayak-nayika bhava* and when the *ālvārs* and the *nāyanmārs* used such modes to express their divine love and longing for the God, it became readily acceptable to the people who felt their nearness to God.

The ancient Tamils were also well aware about the icons of gods and goddesses, which they referred to as *Paṭimai*, and in the worship of which *tava oḷukkam* (penance), *iyalpu* (nature), *kōlkai* (dogma), *kunam* (character), *perarivu* (wisdom), *arccanai* (praise), *pucanai* (worship) and *pramacariyam* (celibacy) are essential prerequisites⁵⁸.

The *bhakti*, thus was a culmination of “the typical Caṅkam Tamil humanism, anthropocentric religion, emotional and sensual character of worship, and the *brahmanic* concept of a transcendental absolute (monotheism), together with several mythological structures”⁵⁹. Hence it is seen that the nuances of *bhakti* is for the first time noticeable in the Caṅkam poetry, as such the origin of *bhakti* and the credit for introducing *bhakti* to the pan-Indian scenario goes to the Tamil land. According to a verse in the *Padma Purāṇa*, the *bhakti* thus spoke:

ham bhaktir iti khyata....

Utpanna dravide caham vrddhim karnalaka

gata kvacit kvcin maharastre gurbare jirnatam gata....

(I was born in the Dravida country, matured in Karnataka, spent my youth wandering in Maharashtra, attained old age in Gujarat...)⁶⁰

Bhakti as a medium for the expression of one's devotion to god is for the first time noticeable in the religious literature such as the *Nālāyiradivya-prabandam* and the *Tēvāram*, which are compilations of the hymns of the Vaishnava *Ālvārs* and the Śaiva *Nāyanmārs*, respectively. The *Nālāyiradivya-prabandam* or 'four thousand sacred hymns' of the Vaishnavite *Ālvārs* has roughly a thousand verse each of Tirumangai, Tondar-adi-podi, Nammālvār, Tiruppanālvār, and Kulasēkhara⁶¹. Composed in chaste Tamil these literary compositions are marked by their intense devotion to God where the elements of miracles and ecstasy are attributed to the God and to His devotees. The *Tēvāram* is a Tamilicised form of Sanskrit *nāyaka* meaning 'leader' and the latter is derived from the root *al* which implies the act of plunging or immersing oneself (deeply in devotion)⁶². *Tēvāram*, is the collection of the hymns of the three *nāyanmār* saints Tirunāvukkaracar (popularly known as Appar), Tiruṅṇānacampantar (Campantar), and Cuntaramūrti (Cuntarar) all of whom are said to have lived within a broad time span of 6th-8th centuries AD⁶³. The *Tēvāram* serves as the primary scripture for Tamil Saivas.

The above religious literatures confirm with the *Āgamas* in advocating the path to god through *bhakti* in which the sole way to realise the Supreme is through uninterrupted mediation and total surrender of oneself before the god. In this form of *bhakti*, the devout identify himself with the divine. *Bhakti* is the worship of God to elevate one's self and his or her surroundings. In *bhakti* there

is deep devotion and affection for God where the *bhakta* ceases to fear for the self, knowing well that God would take care of him or her. The two main characteristics of the *bhakti* are first, the devotee starts visualising the divine within his or her surroundings and secondly, this devotion is externally manifested through devotional music and ecstatic dance and worship with flowers, incense and lighting of lamps. The core of *bhakti* is devotion and temple worship. Thus, the tension in *bhakti* is between emotion and intellect where emotion is to reaffirm the social context and temporal freedom, and intellect is to ground the *bhakti* religious experience in a thoughtful conscious manner⁶⁴. *Bhakti* is characterised by a pronounced earthiness that includes all aspects of ecstatic religion that establish a firm link between poetic symbols and emotive responses⁶⁵. Some of the *bhakti* saints through their hymn express their opposition to the Jains and Buddhists. This is because the Jains, as has been noted earlier, had succeeded in establishing their strong control over the people through their social and religious activities.

2.3.2.A The Bhakti and early Ālvārs

The credit for introducing the Ultimate Being through the concept of *bhakti* in all its simplicity goes to the early Vaishnavite saints – Poigaiālvār, Bhûtamālvār and Peyālvār. All the three ālvārs belong to the early 7th century⁶⁶. The underlining theme of *bhakti* of these early saints was renunciation of desire, except for the desire of the Supreme (god) which is possible only by constant devotion or *bhakti*. To them devotion, experience and enjoyment of God is the highest spiritual experience. Peyalvar declares that devotion to god can bring happiness in this world.

Verse 10. If thou recites the names of God

Who has the white couch with *daksinavarta*?
Then good things such as splendour, vitality, wealth,
Beauty and birth in a faultless family and other
Will all happen to thee.⁶⁷

In the passage quoted above, the idea is not to crave for materialistic needs, but to convey that humans even while fulfilling his or her duties in the materialistic world should at the same time, work towards one's own liberation. Worldliness is not seen as a hindrance to man's realisation of God. Even while carrying out the duties of his or her birth, all that requires for the spiritual upliftment of the individual is the unmitigated thought of the Supreme which is the very cause of his or her existence. In the *bhakti* of Poigaiālvār, Bhūtamālvār, Peyālvār there is a profound expression of *parajñāna* (transcendental knowledge), *parabhakti* (transcendental devotion) and *parama bhakti* (supreme devotion)⁶⁸. According to them the vision or experience of God is *para-jñāna* or search within oneself⁶⁹. For them, "non-purposive or logistic thinking for thinking's sake is incapable of arriving at the vision of god through intuition...Knowledge is not omniscience, though it is held that one must seek in a supramental way, the all knowledge-way of the supermind. It is not an end in itself but a means to the end which transcends knowledge and arrives at Being or Reality"⁷⁰.

The religion of *bhakti* has been beautifully expressed by Ramanujan:

... a religion of arbitrary grace, with a doctrine of mystically chosen elect, replacing a social hierarchy-by-birth with a mystically hierarchy-by-experience; doctrines of work as worship leading to a puritan ethic: monotheism and evangelism, a mixture of intolerance and humanism, harsh and tender"⁷¹.

2.4.A Causes for the rise of Bhakti Movement

The period of the *bhakti* marked a definite change from the earlier Cankam society. The general conception of *bhakti* as a purely religious conflict will be as Zvelebil points out, 'an oversimplification of the whole matter'⁷². Religion, is the life and soul of any society whether tribal or modern and as every factor in society is inter-linked and counterproductive, any ideological change would be due to social, economic or cultural factors. To exclude any one of these would be a gross misinterpretation to processes in history. To quote Rajan Gurukkal: "ideology though predominantly manifest in religion is never exclusively confined to it and religion centred analysis of ideology not only fails to capture this leavening substratum, but also loses sight of its historical context of social totality"⁷³.

It is difficult to perceive religion as isolated and independent of political, social and economic institutions. Therefore it becomes necessary to state as to how and why religious and non-religious factors interacted to shape both religious and non-religious ideas and institutions in early Tamil land.

Economic reasons

To trace the economic and social reason behind the rise of the *bhakti*, it is essential to trace the structure of land from Caṅkam period. The economy was structured on the five geographical divisions or *tinai*s namely, *Mullai*, *Nēydaḷ*, *Kurunji*, *Maruṭam* and *Pālai*⁷⁴. And as such the Caṅkam rulers were not occupying large tracts of land like the latter Pallava and Chola rulers. During the period, trade and commercial activities both inland and foreign was given prominence. This brought in new elements such as the Jains and the Buddhists into the Tamil society mainly the former because of its link with the traders. Gradually with the decline of overseas and inland trade, the focus of economic activities shifted from the

urban centres towards new agricultural tracts and new rural centres that covered the deltaic regions between the Krishna-Godavari and Kaveri regions⁷⁵.

One of the social and economic causes for its rise had been the nexus between the *brahmanas* and the peasants⁷⁶. With the change in the Sangam polity, the emphasis shifted to land and the *brahmanas* emerged as powerful entity with strong peasant backing⁷⁷. The latter was constantly in search for an ideological and religious support group that would give them legitimacy. This *brahmana*-peasant alliance had already been forged since the 2nd-3rd centuries AD by grants such as the *brahmadeya* and the *devabhōga* and the same process had gained much significance in the Tamil region especially after the establishment of the Pallava dynasty.

The *brahmadeyas* were created in agricultural zones and near major irrigation works and occur within all *kōttams* within which the *nadus* evolved⁷⁸. This brought about a closer alliance between the *brahmanas* and the peasants leading to mutual give and take relationship in which the ritual requirements of the dominant peasant groups were met by the *brahmanas* thus elevating their social position. On their side, the *brahmanas* made their religion more accommodative and strengthened their social position by assimilating the local cult divinities such as *Seyon* or the *Murugu* and the *Māyōn* the black god of the pastrolists as *Krishna*⁷⁹ keeping in view the indigenous believes and practices of the peasants. The alliance further served their individual interests as the *brahmanas* emerged as champions of the popular religion and the peasants did on the other hand succeeded in emerging as powerful social groups. Thus we see here an attempt by the *brahmanas* to safeguard their social and economic interests and on the other hand, an attempt by the peasants in fostering their hold over the land and in the process consolidating their social, economic and religious rights. The *bhakti* was popular sentiment appealing to all section of the society and this was a medium

through which a common bond was established between the *brahmanas*, the ruling powers and the lay people. This paved the way for the later day influential role that the *brahmanas* came to occupy within the social hierarchy.

Social reasons

Bhakti was also a reaction to the heterodox sects particularly Jainism which had since the 3rd century BC succeeded in extending its sway over the Tamil land. The use of local dialect Tamil by the Jains in disseminating their religious doctrines and through the social role played by their monasteries, had paved the way for the Jains to emerge powerful influential groups. One of the primary reasons for this was the state patronage that the Jains had consolidated. The Pallankoil copper plate grant of the Pallava Simhavarman III would indicate that the Jains through the receipt of *pallichchandam* land grants were emerging as powerful landed groups particularly in major heartland of Tondaimandalam such as Kanchipuram, the seat of Pallava power. With these activities Jainism posed a direct threat to the political, social and economic interest of the peasants and the *brahmanas*. The brahmanical supporters objected to this great influx by Jainism into the Tamil society. Jainism being a non-indigenous religion, the local peasants with brahmanical support adopted ways and means to check the consolidation of Jains in the Tamil land, which otherwise would be detrimental to the interests of the *brahmanas* and the peasant folks.

The social reason for the rise of the *bhakti* against the Jains were cemented because of the latter's non-Tamil origin. This was furthered by their strange practices regarding food, clothing and other customs. The Jain stressed on a series of negations such as renunciation of all worldly materials, including clothing. They Digambara Jains were even critical of womanhood and vehemently

rejected the idea of liberation for women. Hence, the stage was set for the rise of a dominant ideology, which could be socially, economically and politically be in tandem with the needs of the people.

The other reason for the *bhakti* had been a sequel to the doctrine of the Jains. It will be studied below that the harsh practices of the Digambaras monastic organisations such as their strict adherence to body mortification, their food and living habits were the objects of severe attack by the *bhakti* saints.

Thus the seeds for devotion and protest against Jains (and Buddhist) began initially as an expression of the personal mystic experiences of devotees. But this slowly and vigorously took the form of a movement engulfing the entire length and breadth of the Tamil land and effecting almost all institutions, both social, religions, cultural, therein.

2.5.A Nayanmar Bhakti : Tirunāvukkaracar- Biography and activities

To understand the *bhakti* period it will be necessary to take an account of the autobiography of prominent *bhakti* saints. The rise, spread and development of *bhakti* has to be studied in relation to their personal experiences, the cult of devotion, and the extent of their sectarian propagation. Though the credit for introducing *bhakti* as an instrument for popular devotion goes to the early *alvars*, the credit for taking *bhakti* as a tool to establish the supremacy of the *brahmanical* religion is to be assigned to the proselytizing zeal of the *nayanmars*.

They are vociferous in proclaiming the superiority of Śiva and the Śaiva sect. An autobiographical account of the *nayanmars* is found from the *Tēvāram*. Initially, the hymns of the three important saints of Śaivism, namely Tirunāvukkaracar (Appar), Tiruṅṇānacampantar (Campantar) and Cuntaramūrtti

(Cuntarar) were collected and compiled in seven volumes by Nampi Antar Nampi in the 11th century AD which came to be known as *Tirumurai* or 'Sacred Tradition' or 'Sacred text'⁸⁰. The story about the canonization of *Tirumurai* is narrated in the 14th century AD *Tirumuraikanta Purānam* of Umāpati Sivācharya⁸¹. According to the legend, the poet Nampi Antar Nampi was assigned by Chola Kulōthunga III with the task of unravelling the hymns of Saiva saints and after an intense search, he discovered the half-destroyed manuscripts of hymns from a sealed room in the Siva temple in Chidambaram⁸².

The early of the *nāyanmārs* to dominate the *bhakti* scene during the 7th century AD is Tirunāvukkaracar. The fourth, fifth, and sixth *Tirumurai* carry the three hundred and twelve hymns of Tirunāvukkaracar⁸³. He has been placed between 580 AD to 630 AD thus making him the contemporary of Pallava Mahendravarman I and Narasimhavarman I⁸⁴. He is the earliest of the *nāyanmār's* to have sung in the glory of Śiva temples in Tondaimandalam. His hymns have been given greater importance in the research because he is considered as the contemporary of Pallava ruler Mahendravarman I. This is based on the evidences provided by Campantar's autobiography, where in the boy saint is said to have met the elderly Tirunavukkaracar in 640 AD and the former also mentions Ciruttontar, the general who assisted Pallava Narasimhavarman II in his campaign against the Chalukyas⁸⁵.

The *Tirunāvukkaracar Tēvāram*⁸⁶ gives an autobiographical insight into the life and experiences of Tirunāvukkaracar. Before a study is undertaken on the life of the saint it is essential to state, with due respect, that an element of miracles are noticed in the narration of his personal experiences. He was born as Marulneekiyar in a *vellala* (agriculturist) family from Tiruvamur⁸⁷. He embraced Jainism, at a very young age and excelled in Jain doctrines. In due to course of time he heads the Jain

monastery at Pataliputira (in modern Cuddalore district). It was at the Pataliputra monastery the *Lokavibhāga* was composed as early as 458 AD. It was a reputed institution graced by illustrious Jaina scholars such as Sarvanandin and Vajranandi. According to the autobiography, Marulneekiyār's sister, Tilakavatiyār was greatly disturbed by the rebellious attitude of her brother and prayed to Lord Śiva to get him back to the Śaiva fold. Accordingly, Marulneekiyār was laid down with an acute stomachache, which the Jains fail in curing. Finally, he leaves the Jain monastery to be with his sister and she is stated to have taken Marulneekiyār to the Śiva temple at Tiruvadigai. The legend has it that at the shrine, he was immediately relived of the pain and as gratitude to the Lord for relieving him of his misery, Marulneekiyār sung in praise of Lord Śiva. Śiva greatly touched by the melodious hymns of Marulneekiyār, addresses him as Tirunāvukkaracar. After this miraculous event Tirunāvukkaracar has sung many hymns in praise of Lord Śiva. One such hymns that he composed at Tirvadigai Virattaanam, the scene of his conversion is:

He cured me of my malady and owns me as His servitor;
He rules over Atikai Veerattaanam; He cut the head,
Of him of the Lotus and holds it in His hand; He received
Alms in that skull; he drew out the blood from the great
Body of Vaamana; He holds the weapon of *mazhu* in His right hand;
He smote the body of Kaama with a look of His;
He is Kapali
Who approved even the servitorship of Kannappar
(v.939 of Tanitthirutthaandakam II)⁸⁸.

In many of the other hymns that Tirunāvukkaracar sung, the same element of happiness and relief at having realised the all-pervading Śiva is felt. In these hymns it is noted that the physical beauty of the Lord is praised and the poet seems to be aware of all the associated paraphernalia of Śiva.

He is decked with a wreath of *koovilam*;
He is of Virattaanam;
His mount is a Bull;
He wears a speckled serpent;
He is the One whose mount is a bird;
He is the golden-hued;
He is the One that merits praise;
He is the glorious Lord, seldom known;
He is of Atiaraiyamangkai-upon Gedilam;
He indeed is the Lord-God
Pity it is that I

The poor one, did in the past, dispraise Him.

(v.22 Tiruvatikaivirattaanam Yezhaitthirutthaandakam)⁸⁹

Alas, alas, I have wasted many, many days, not hailing
Him of Pullirukkuvelur; He is the Creator; He is
The consort of Her- the fresh liana; He is the deceptive
One who concealed in His spreading matted hair the river;
He is close to me; He cured me and keeps me inseparable
From Him; He is the goodly import of the four Vedas;
He wears a cool chaplet- the white crescent; He is
The primal cause, the One that rides a fast-moving Bull;
He is Naaraayana; He is the holy One that sprang from the Lotus
(v.549.Tirupullirukkuvelur)⁹⁰

With many an instrument, the Bhootha-Hosts orchestrate
His glory; he is coral-hued and crystal- hued;
In His matted hair where flows the flood, He keeps
A crescent too; He sports a blue patch in His beauteous neck;
Breasts; He lured from them their bangles too;
He seized and owns the whole of Otriyoor: He cured me
Of my bodily malady and redeemed me.
(v. 944 of Tanitthirutthaandakam II)⁹¹

O holy One presiding over Poompukaloor ! What can I-
The one endowed with thinking -, think of, save
The sacred feet of our Lord? Save the vision of Your ankleted
Feet which I adore with folded hands, I am without vision,
Without refuge; in this, my body, You have fixed nine gates;
I will grow inscient when they shut
Simultaneously;
(So, be pleased to accept me even now!)
Unto Your feet, I am bound, O holy One.
(v.971. Tiruppukaloor Tiruthaandakam)⁹²

O holy One that presides over Poompukaloor! O Lord
Cinctured with a hooded serpent! O one of the milk-white ash!
O One who wears a *kuzhai* of crystal (line shell)!
O One congregate with Her whose eyes are touched
With *khol* and who utters sweet melodic words! You hold
A fawn in Your hand; You cured me of the deeds which
The five deceitful filchers enacted in me; it is no falsehood
When I say, I am bound to Your feet.
(v.973. Tiruppukaloor Tiruthaandakam)⁹³

In many of the hymns he regrets for not realising the divine nature of Siva mainly because of the association he had with the Jains. These are expressed in the hymns he sung at Chitrambalam, Tiruvatikai Virattaanam, Tiruyerumbiyoor and in his *Tanithiruthaandakam* verses. From the hymns sung at Tiruyerumbiyoor, he expresses his grief for wasting his life in the company of the Jains. Here he describes their extreme form of body mortification and their philosophy of creation indicated by the term *Aaramba Vaadaa*. *Aaramba Vaadaa* deals with the creation of cosmos, which is structured, with the smallest unit of atoms⁹⁴.

I wasted my days in sheer ignorance, companied
With the cruel, brainless ones of filthy mouths
Who practised *Aaramba Vaadaa*, all unaware of *dharmā*;
I, the brainless, would not, even unconsciously think
Of the sacred feet; thus, even thus, I wasted all my life;
My days of existence were worthless days;
Of the Lord and got steeped in the loving servitorship
Of Him – the ruddy flame, the Ruby atop Yerumbiyoor
Hill; I, even I, was blessed to reach and attain Him.
(v. 904 Tiruyerumbiyoor)⁹⁵

Base was my company, bad my quality and bad my ideal;
I am full of flaws; base was my (externally) beautiful
Guise; I am bad; I am not a wise man; I did not
Company with the goodly; neither am I a middling
Animal; nor am I not a beast; of odious things
I speak over much; I have marred my clan;
I but beg and never give; why, O why was I,
The poor one, born at all?
(v.937 Tanitthirutthaandakam)⁹⁶

He transfixes Antakaasura with His sharp spear;
He made the Vedas His steeds; He blessed Sundaran
To whisk a pair of Kavari-s for Him; He has the crematory
As His dancing place; He bent mandara into a well-made
Martial bow; he made Maakaalan His ostiary; poised
In Tantras and Mantras He dispensed grace; it is He
Who cured me of Samanaism and redeemed me.
(v.943. Tanitthirutthaandakam II)⁹⁷

He is the Mantra and the import of the Vedas;
He is the moon, sun, air, fire, sky, mountain and sea;
He is the One presiding over Atiaraiyamangkai;
He is the One hailed by the two in melodic hymns.
Folding their hands in adoration,

Indra and all the celestials,
at dawn and dusk,
hail Him with many a fragrant flower.
Pity it is, that I, the poor one,
Did, in the past, dispraise Him.
(v.25. Tiruvatikaivirattaanam Yezhaitthirutthaandakam)⁹⁸

The hymns of Tirunāvukkaracar also provide insights into his life as a Jain. There is a deep sense of regret in these hymns for having led his life in vain mortification of the body and denying it even the simplest pleasure of a bath, or cleanliness such as brushing the teeth and clothing his body. He also describes as to how he roamed around as a naked ascetic carrying a bunch of peacock feathers and while consuming food as prescribed by Jain monastic rules.

They covet food and eat it from their (cupped) hands;
They stand unashamed before women of tapering breasts;
These are *Amanas* after whom I went *following* their words;
Truly I roamed like a demon of *goondas*;
He wears a chaplet of Knorai buzzed by bees;
He is hailed by the celestials;
He is the Lord of the eight directions.
Pity it is that I, the poor senseless one,
did, in the past, dispraise Him.
(v.28. Tiruvattikai Virattaanam)⁹⁹

I was a fit associate of the Saman goondas of
stinking mouths, who tote in their hands pots set in slings;
I ate rice and curry mixed with *ghee*, from out of my (cupped) palms;
I became a repulsive sight to beholders;
I, the one of evil karma,
will never again think of Him
who ate the venom of the billowy sea.
Pity it is that I, the poor one,
did, in the past, dispraise Him.
(v.29. Tiruvattikai Virattaanam)¹⁰⁰

Thus it is seen that there is an attempt on the part of the *nayanmar* saint to undermine the Jaina concept of renunciation and body mortification for attaining liberation, which were in complete contrast with the vibrant Śaiva tradition. But a point to be inferred from these hymns is that though there is criticism of Jaina practices and about their doctrines, none of these hymns express anything that could be termed as violent.

Tirunāvukkaracar's hymns in praise of Śiva are indicative of his pilgrimages to the sacred shrines associated with Śiva. By undertaking pilgrimages and by associating places with Śiva, Tirunavukkaracar succeeded to a large extent in creating a sacred geography dotted with Śiva temples. Some of these places are Chitrāmbalam, Muzhaiyoor, Pazghayarai, Tiruvatikai Virattanam, Kanchipuram, Valanjuzhi, Tiruchirappalli, Varanasi et al which are glorified in his verse 700 to 721 of *Tēvāram Kshetrakkovai* (The list of Holy shrines)¹⁰¹. Another notable factor in these hymns is the extreme devotion to Śiva and a strong belief in the ultimate protective power of the Lord. Lord Śiva in all his characteristic paraphernalia is presented as the Ultimate goal of all individuals craving for his or her liberation. Śiva is hailed as the lord of all creations, the source of life, the originator of the Vedas, the destroyer of evil and the rescuer, the Supreme dancer and musician.

He is our Lord whose neck is dark; He wears a white
Kuzhau in His ear; He is adorned with a garland
Of suaveolent konrai; He is clad in the tiger skin;
His form is of Gnosis and nought is, but for Him;
His chest is decked with chains of gems; he is Pigngananka;
His car is wrought of the four divine Vedas; He is the One
Abiding at Tiruvaanaikkaa; He is the rich mass
Of water in which I did bathe
(v.633.Tiruvaanaikkaa)¹⁰²

Tondaimandalam felt the spell of the Śaiva devotional movement from the early part of the 7th century AD because many of the hymns of Tirunāvukkaracar were composed in shrines located in the region such as Tiruvatikai Virattaanam, Tirukkazhukkunram, Tirukkacchi Ekampam et al. Composed in Tamil, the hymns are clear in expression and easy to comprehend because of which it was able to create an instant rapport with people. In his hymns, Tirunavukkaracar addresses himself as the servitor of Lord Śiva and offers himself to the Lord and ultimate reality in whose company there is no scope for fear or inhibition. His hymns expresses his gratitude to the Lord for having accepted him as His devotee. The hymns of Tirunāvukkaracar describe the beauty and splendour of Lord Śiva and they are perhaps the earliest source through which the anthropomorphic form of Śiva was introduced to the people of Tamil land. This later became the source for the development of iconography of various forms of Śiva, which found profound expression in the numerous magnificent sculptures, and other works of art. Few of the verses describing the beauty and awe of Śiva as,

He has on His matted hair the fragrant *konrai*
Of golden beauty; He wears a tiger-skin;
He also keeps a river; on His shapely and aeviternal shoulder
He sports a *mazhu*; He has a *kuzhai* on His dangling
Ear-lobe; He also keeps a crescent; He is concorporate
With Her of fulgurant waist; He mantles Himself
In the hide of a tusker; He wears the sacred thread;
He placed His hallowed feet on my head;
Good indeed is what our Lord of Nallor has wrought.
(v.138. Tirunaloor)¹⁰³

My Father of karukaavoor is the Eye; is both
The creator and the one who measured the earth;
He is the One whose nature is incomprehensible;
He smote
Simultaneously the hostile towns with blazing fire;
He caused
The trident and the *mazhu* to become His weapons;
He girt His waist with a peerless snake;
He rides a Bull; He would agitate the hearts
Of them who practise deception.
(v.152.Tirukkarukaavoor)¹⁰⁴

The importance of the sacred ash and the *Panchākshara mantrā* are taken to the people in simple devotional styles.

Triune in His form, though He is One only; He is the true
Meaning of AUM; He can discern the cruel deception
Born of *manam* abiding in the body; He is the nectarean One
Who graced the Brahmachaari by kicking
Death to death with His ankleted foot; He is the Lord
Of the immortals; He always showers prosperity
On them who hail Him as their Lord in swelling love;
O heart, contemplate Him of TiruvaalampoZHil
Abiding at Parampaikkudi in the South¹¹¹.
(v. 853. TiruvaalampoZHil)¹⁰⁵

If they chant not the sacred name, the Panchaakshara,
If they never praise the greatness of the fire – hued Lord,
If they never circumambulate the sacred shrine, if they
Eat without plucking flowers and offering them in worship,
If they wear not the white ash that quells cruel maladies,
They are surely endowed with grace, If you ask:
“Wherefore are they born?” I say: “It is only to die,
Cruelly tormented by chronic diseases, and to get born
Only to die thus. This indeed is their lot”.
(v. 934.Tanithirutthaandakam)¹⁰⁶

His crown is decked with a crest-jewel; He is the bright One
Bedaubed with the fragrant white ash;
He wears a serpent of poisonous sacs; He, the handsome One,
Is clad in the skin of the murderous tiger;
He is daily hailed in the manam of devotees; He is
The supremely desirable One; He is the nude One;
He is the triple-eyed: He is the Ruler: He is the
Lord of Aaroor;
Unwittingly, alas, alas! I, the base cur, was
Forgetful of Him.
(v. 296. Tiruvaaroor)¹⁰⁷.

Apart from providing information about ancient Śiva temples, the places associated with Him, His forms et al, the hymns are also useful in understanding the socio-religious developments and inter-religious relationships of the time. It is a natural phenomenon that any idea conveyed through the medium of music has a tendency to appeal to people and also reach far away areas. Such a phenomenon was particularly notable due to the effects of the Tiruṇāvukkaracar's hymns. Thus it is seen that Śaivism received a fillip at the hands of the *bhakti* proponents and in the process Jainism had to recede to the background. It is a natural reaction because human's by nature are emotional and when this element is related to the Supreme, (here Siva), with whom one can relate and the one who will offer protection, it is bound to command wide following.

The purpose of the study undertaken is to assess the influence of *bhakti* over Tondaimandalam and the ensuing relationship that existed between the Śaivites and the Jains. Hence, it is essential in the context of the *bhakti* to provide a brief insight into the religion of Mahendravarman I during whose reign *bhakti* is said to have spread its wings over Tondaimandalam.

2.6.A Mahendravarman I and his religion

The religion of Mahendravarman I has been a topic of immense debate among scholars. The theory that has been popular among the scholars is that he was a Jaina converted to Śaivism by Tirunāvukkaracar¹⁰⁸. This inference has been drawn from the Śaivite work, the *Periyapurāṇam*, which assigns this ruler to be a Jain who supported the Jains in their persecution of Tirunāvukkaracar for the latter's conversion. The hagiological literature goes on to say that, the king having witnessed the failure of the Jains in punishing Trināvukkaracar, realises the power of Lord Śiva and thus himself embraces Śaivism. And it further states that the King named Gunadhara was responsible for the destruction of the Jaina *Pallī* at Pataliputiram¹⁰⁹ (v.1411, *Tiruninracharukkam* in *Periyapurāṇam*) and the materials thus recovered were used to build the Gunadhareechuram Śiva temple near Tiruvadigai Virattanam. (v.1411, *Tiruninracharukkam* in *Periyapurāṇam*)¹¹⁰. This Gunadhara was equated with Gunabhara, one of the titles of Mahendravarman I and hence on this basis the king was identified with the said ruler.

Another historical document that has been used in supporting the theory of Mahendravarman I being a Jain and later converting to Saivism, has been his Tiruchirappali inscription. Almost every literature on the history of South India, has taken inference of the phrase, '*vipākṣa-vṛttēh parāvṛttam*' from the inscription to prove the change of religion of Mahendravarman I.

The literary work of Mahendravarman I, namely the *Matavillāsaprahasana* has also been interpreted to support the aforesaid theory of him being a convert to Śaivism. This work of his is one of the world's earliest farcical plays¹¹¹, wherein the characters are adherents of diverse sects such as the Kāpilakas, Kālāmukhas, Paśupatas, the Jains and the Buddhists, operating in

Kanchipuram during the 7th century AD. The work is replete with satirical anecdotes relating to the practices and ideals of the above mentioned sects. The play opens with the search for the lost skull bowl by a Kāpālīka couple. They doubt the members of other sects particularly the Buddhists and to a lesser extent the Jains and in the process expresses sarcasm at their philosophies and practices. The Jaina doctrine of liberation is mocked at while the Buddhist monk in the play is portrayed as a person weak in character and who cannot comprehend the strict monastic rules of his own faith. As compared to other sects there are fewer references to the Jains in the play and this has been interpreted to suggest that this was purposely done as Mahendravarman I was a Jain.

The above theories of Mahendravarman I being a Śaivite convert from Jainism is supported by another fact that he built Śaiva rock-cut temples deliberately in the Jaina centres¹¹².

But K.R. Srinivasan differs from the above popular theory¹¹³. According to him the above mentioned evidences are not conclusive about the religion and conversion of the Mahendravarman I. He points that the *Periyapurāṇam* cannot be relied upon, as it was written some four hundred years later than the supposed event of the king's conversion. According to him the destruction of the Pataliputra Jaina monastery and the construction of the Gunadharichchuram Śiva temple, using the debris of the former, would have found prominent mention in Tirunāvukkaracar's *Tēvāram*. But such a supposed event is neither sung about or is mentioned in any of his numerous *Tēvāram* hymns. Archaeologically, he further states that debris of the demolished structure could not have been used for the construction of the temple, since the former would have yielded only useless brick debris¹¹⁴. The scholar further contends that there is a reference to 'Konē-kunapparanē' in the *Nālāyiradivya-prabandham* hymn of Tirumalisai ālvār, which

actually means the 'repository of all virtues'. Hence on similar basis the Gunadharichchuram would stand for Śiva-the bearer of all *guṇas*.

A survey of the primary sources would be necessary to assess the religion of Mahendravarman I. As has been pointed out by Neelakanta Sastri¹¹⁵, much reliability was laid on the *Periyapurāṇam* of Sekkizhar, which was composed in c.12th century AD is replete with numerous miracles that cannot be treated as history. If indeed Mahendravarman I was converted to Śaivism by Tirunāvukkaracar, then the latter's own hymns would have mentioned the event, but the fact that this has not been done so, puts the conversion theory under question. With due respect to *Periyapurāṇam*, it nevertheless is to be mentioned that it was written at a time when the Jains had started regaining their lost position in the Tamil land and the birth of *Periyapurāṇam* is itself a sequel to the popularity of Jaina text *Civakacintāmani* and its obsession by the Chola ruler Kulōthunga II¹¹⁶. It was, hence but natural for the author Sekkizhar to be critical of the Jains. These accounts may at times be exaggerative, but the value of *Periyapurāṇam* as one of the priceless works in the history of Indian religion particularly Śaivism remains unparalleled.

The other source for Mahendravarman I's supposedly conversion theory is his Tiruchirappali inscription which is engraved on a pillar in the rock cut cave of *Lalitānkura Pallēsvara Griham* at Tiruchchirappali which was excavated by Mahendravarman I. The inscription is engraved in Pallava *grantha* and in Sanskrit language¹¹⁷.

5.rau nityan=tisthati Pallavasya dayitām=ētām bru-
6. vānā nadīm 11 Guṇabhara-nāmani rājan̄y=anēna li-
7. ṅgēna liṅgini jñānam [1*] prathatāñ=cirāya lōkē vi-
8. pakṣa-vṛttēh parāvṛttam 11 [6*] cōla-viṣayasya śailō-.....¹¹⁸

In the above verse written in the *Āryan* meter, the author uses the medium of *Taraksāsthra*¹¹⁹. Here the word *liṅgam* is the subject and *lingin* is the knowledge that is deduced from the subject¹²⁰. *Liṅga* in the above passage when taken with *haraśya tanu* connotes a form or body and hence refers to the cave temple¹²¹, because *liṅga* was not placed in the temples till about the 8th century AD¹²². Hence, by using this poetic medium and the indicatory mark (the Gangadhara image), Gunabhara alias Mahendravarman I aims at reaching out to the masses about the qualities of the executioner, here about himself¹²³. In the verse '*Vipakṣha vṛttēh*', *vipakṣha* stands for negative illustration which in the context would stand to refer to all those who are devoid of the good qualities that the king Gunabhara alias Mahendravarman I possess. Hence, through the erection of the *sailim-tanu* (the magnificent edifice image of Śiva Gangadhara) all the ignorant have to be made aware of (*parāvṛttam*) the meritorious act, which is different from all creations of the world¹²⁴. In the light of these interpretations it is very clear that there is no reference to the conversion, about the religion of Mahendravarman I or his aim to spread Śaivism among the Jains. But it is to be stated that Mahendravarman I proclaims his meritorious act and declares his unique artistic character, something like what he had done after excavating his first rock-cut temple at Mandagapattu where he declares himself to be *vichchitrachitta* (or curious minded).

As for assessing the religion of Mahendravarman I from the *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, the author had not deemed it necessary to mention too much on the Jains because the Jains as is known, strictly adhered to their harsh doctrines. They, through their practices of plucking their hair out, by fixing time for consumption of food, strict dress code and monastic life had a strong psychological control over its adherents particularly monastic groups. Hence, the

author would have found it difficult to criticise such a disciplined monastic order. The sole subject of the Jains that seems to have gained attention of the author's ridicule is their extreme form of body mortification for attaining *moksa*.

In the light of these, it is to be inferred that Mahendravarman I through his literary composition had only sought to project the negative qualities that had crept into the various dogmas of various sects with each trying to attract adherents to its own belief. There is no inference in the work about the religion of Mahendravarman I or about his Jain adherence. The literature provides an extensive idea about various ascetic sects and their practices, which were operating in the city of Kanchipuram such as the Kāpālikas, the Jains, the Buddhists and the Paśupatas.

The *Bhagavadajjukka*¹²⁵ is another farcical play written by Mahendravarman I. It portrays the philosophical and ideological thoughts prevalent during the period of its composition and hence serves as an important source for historical study. The philosophical doctrines imparted during the narration of the play also reflect Jaina beliefs and practices such as *Sāṃśāric* bondage of man (v.14,18,22,43,54) and how one can attain liberation from this cycle by adhering to the principles of desirelessness (v.24) and non-attachment (v.26,28, 70, 161). The doctrines mentioned lay emphasis upon the necessity to acquire right knowledge as an instrument for self-control. Self-control is advocated to reach the state of *yoga* from where one realises the nature of true self thus reaching the state of liberation (v.86, 94,104, 106). Further, there are glimpses of monastic rules that are exclusive products of Jainism such as the instruction to his disciple by his ascetic teacher to beg for food only after ascertaining that the householders have consumed their diet (v.40). The incorporation of Jaina philosophical thought and their monastic practices

obviously indicate that the author of the play was aware of the various doctrines that were prevailing at that time in the Pallava capital of Kanchipuram.

The internal evidences provided by both the texts, the *Matavilāsaprahasana* and the *Bhagavadajjukka* suggest the existence of ascetic orders over Kanchipuram and they do not provide anything to indicate the Jaina persuasion of Mahendravarman I. All that can be stated here that, Mahendravarman I was intensely aware of the different sects operating in his domain with their own distinct characteristics. He was mainly concerned with highlighting their philosophies, practices and customs, which were at times strange and not in conformity with day to day life. Another interesting fact that arises out of these literatures is that these are the reaction of the ruler against the establishment of a parallel society in the region¹²⁶. The play mounts an all-round attack on the ascetics and their degenerate way of life. The target in the play is not the act of renunciation but the renounce who were posing a direct threat to the social order by seeking to establish parallel centres of power and authority¹²⁷.

The researcher in the light of the above evidences also agrees with the view expressed by K.R.Srinivasan that the religion and conversion of the king cannot be inferred as has been done by previous scholars. Though there is nothing in the *Tēvāram* hymns to prove that he was a Jain by faith, his compositions would reveal that he was aware of the Jaina philosophy, which was well established during the time because of its well-organised monastic setup. Being influenced does not necessarily imply his adherence to the faith.

The Gunadharichchuram temple (detailed with photos in the III Chapter) referred in the account of *Periyapurāṇam* is a brick built structure. At present lying in a dilapidated condition, it enshrines a *Liṅga*. It is highly

improbable that a brick structure when destroyed could be used to build another shrine that too a temple for Śiva. The unacceptability of the incident is further inferred from the fact that very near the Pallava capital city Kanchipuram, Tiruparruttikunram, a flourishing Jain monastery existed. It is easy to comprehend that if a Jaina temple and monastery could exist without any destruction or facing the wrath of the Śaiva adherents near the capital, then surely the king need not have bothered about a Jaina *Palli* that existed about hundred kilometres away.

The excavation of the rock cut temples near the Jain resorts, could be because Mahendravarman I through the symbolism of Śaiva temples aimed to project the multiplicity of Śaiva philosophy that stand for the concept of *yōga* and *bhōga*. In Śaivism, the devout need not renounce the world to attain liberation or to realise the Ultimate for this could be achieved through unmitigated devotion to the Lord. Moreover through his artistic creations, it was the main aim of Mahendravarman I to project the equilibrium of various sects with variation in their mode of worship and philosophy. These are also significant, as it is an eloquent testimony to the religious tolerance of Mahendravarman I. He aimed at forging a sense of unity in diversity among different religious sects. This is nowhere more explicit than his *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, where Mahendravarman I leaves no stone unturned in providing a critical note on the practices of varying sects such as the Śaivites, the Buddhists and the Jains.

Hence, in the light of the above interpretations, it becomes unacceptable to assume the religious fanaticism of Mahendravarman I. The fact that his reign witnessed existence of diverse beliefs would only suggest the multiplicity of beliefs and monastic orders in the Pallava homeland. As such

Mahendravarman I was exposed to dogmas of these varied groups but he was particularly an ardent Śaiva but at the same time he nowhere persecuted members of the opposite sects. It would be justifiable to state that he was a great statesman, with all qualities of a secular monarch, an artist and a composer.

2.7.A Other Bhakti Saints

The *bhakti* based on the personal experiences of Tirunavukkaracar played a wider role in the dissemination of Siva devotion and this process of narrating their experiences and putting forth these in hymns was adopted by other individuals. The prominent of these *bhakti* saints is Tiruṅṇānacampantar, the younger contemporary of Tirunāvukkaracar whom the former addresses as Appar or father. Born into a *brahman* family at Cirkali, the boy saint is perhaps the well known of the *nāyanmār* saints to be immortalised through the numerous hymns he has sung in praise of Lord Śiva. His 383 hymns are contained in the first three books of the *Tirumurai*. It is interesting to note that Campantar in his eight, ninth and tenth verses of his hymns refer to the myth of Ravana, Śiva as the cosmic *liṅga* and to denounce the Jains and the Buddhists¹²⁸. Campantar's relationship with god, as inferred from his compositions, is that of an intimate relationship with Śiva. A majority of his hymns were produced at Cirkali and others at Tillai, Vizhimizhalai, Tirvaiyaru, Madurai, and few at Kanchipuram. Among all the *nāyanmār* saint's Campantar is the vehement denouncer of the heterodox sects of Jainism (and Buddhism). He does not hide his hatred for the Jains, their unclean and unhygienic habits, and their method of consuming food, their nakedness, extreme form of body mortification and even their shaven heads. His hymns like Tirunāvukkaracar's hymns are replete with devotion and love towards Śiva and the only message in these hymns is the attainment of liberation by surrendering oneself to the Lord. He played a significant role in creating a sacred space

centring on Siva. He like Tirunavukkaracar is largely held responsible for the conversion of Pandya ruler Ninracir Netumaran from being a Jain to be a devout Saiva but this account too is not corroborated with his own hymns¹²⁹.

Similar sentiments towards the worship of Vishnu are encountered in the hymns of the *ālvārs*. Unlike the *nāyanmārs*, they were not vociferous in establishing their devotional appeal over the people. Some of the *ālvār* saints such as Tirumangai and Tontaratippoti *ālvār* also have sung against the domination by the Jains (and the Buddhists). The former lived during the late half of the 8th century AD and has composed hymns at the shrine of Vaikuntha Perumal at Kanchipuram. Alvars such as Tontaratippoti consider themselves to be the 'dust of the feet of the devotees of Vishnu', hence it is seen that the proponents of *bhakti* took unmitigated selfless worship of the divine to its greatest peak. Tontaratippoti virtually calls for the physical annihilation of those who speak ill of Vishnu¹³⁰.

The *bhakti* of these saints is carried forward by later saints, such as Cuntarar, Manikkavāchakar, Nammālvār, Andal, Karaikal Ammaiyar et al. Hence in the background of these, it is to be noted that *bhakti* succeeded in establishing a mass movement based on the intense devotion. This was the characteristic of the age, but the theory of religious persecution does not find much evidences, because the skirmishes that the saints had with the Jains were largely on a personal front and as such cannot be treated as the nature of the movement itself.

The history of Jainism in Tondaimandalam was halted for a brief period because they could not counter the rich and colourful myth surrounding the numerous brahmanical deities. These heterodox sects were taken by surprise by the *bhakti* ideologists. Jainism recovered from its brief set in the Tamil land from late 8th century AD but once again rose when it found the situation to be suitable

for its resurrection. In fact there are evidences from the writing of the travel accounts of Heun Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited the Pallava kingdom during the reign of Narasimhavarman I Mamalla in 642 AD¹³¹. He observes that Jainism was in majority compared to the Buddhist over the city of Kanchipuram and that there were many Deva temples. For a long time Jainism, nevertheless had to contend with the powerful groups of Śaivism and Vaishnavism, but was always present and rearing to rise at the right opportune time.

2.8.A Repercussions of the Bhakti movement

The Tamil *bhakti* was closely associated with the teaching and ethos of the large body of ritualistic literature called the *Agamas* and *Tantras*, which developed along with the spread of theism, image worship in Hinduism¹³². From the age of the poet-saints to the present, the temple or shrine has occupied a central position in the literature and practice of Tamil Śaivism and Vaishnavism. It is this Agamic flavour that set the religion of the *nāyanmārs* and *ālvārs* apart from the devotionism of even the more traditionalist of the later *bhakti* saints in other regions of India¹³³. In contrast to the extreme form of asceticism, the *bhakti* saints placed their endless loyalty to God, and preached endless love and not suffering. They attempted at a union of the idealised and typified love of the *akam* of the Sangam classics and ecstasies of eternal love¹³⁴.

The *bhakti* saints projected themselves as the champions of the brahmanical tradition. The poet-saints sung songs of passionate and total devotion for their god in the local language and this helped in the spread of *bhakti* throughout the Tamil region cutting across barriers of caste, sex, and other hierarchies of orthodox Hinduism. *Bhakti* contrary to the concept of denial and renunciation preached by the Jains to attain liberation preached liberation through

total devotion and worship. Contrary to the strict doctrine of non-attachment and severe ascetic practices of the Jains, the *bhakti* ideologists propagated the use of dance and music to experience the essence of the divine. The *bhakti* was the 'triumph of the emotion over intellect', of the 'concrete over the abstract', of the "acceptance of life over its ascetic denial, of something near and homely against something alien and distant, and above all the acceptance of positive love against cold morality or intellectually coloured compassion."¹³⁵.

Through the *āgamās* and the *bhakti*, the saints preached that renunciation is not a necessity to *moksha*, which shook the very foundation of Jaina philosophy. The saints by undertaking pilgrimages to various temples and places sought to create a moral landscape. These poets associated *Sthalapurānas* with either Śiva or with Vishnu, which led to the proliferation of the temple with landed properties that resulted in the emergence of temples as landed magnates.

The *bhakti* period witnessed the construction of a large number of temples and the introduction of the *āgamic* mode of worship in these temples. With the introduction of *āgamic* worship, the *brāhmanas* engaged in priestly function in temples acquired high ritual status, which in the long run led to the emergence of a hierarchy around the temple, based on brahmanical caste relations. In the long run, the *bhakti* movement resulted in the growth of temples and the class of *brahmana* priests who came to occupy great power and prestige in the society.

2.8.1.A Bhakti and its effect on Saivism (and Vaishnavism)

The most notable effect of the *bhakti* movement had been the rise of the Śaiva religion and Śaiva *bhakti*. Being a theistic philosophy, the nascent state of Śaiva Siddhanta is in the *bhakti* movement when the three saints-

Tirunavukkaracar, Tirunanacampantar and Sundarar extol the Lord and His connections with the Agamas¹³⁶.

The process of acculturation and assimilation was instrumental in transforming Tamil Śaiva cult into a Śaiva sect during this period and this was in because of the popularisation of the puranic lore associated with Śiva through the concept of *bhakti*. Places and sacred spots came to be identified with the divine activities of the Lord thus in the process giving a local Tamil identity to Lord Śiva.

Śaiva *bhakti* emphasised on the worldly life and at the same time preached for meditation upon the feet of the Lord so as to work towards liberation. To the absolute determinism of the Jains, the *nāyanmārs* provided the sense of grace and salvation through *bhakti*. This triumph of Śaivism is due to non-acceptance and non-adherence to sacrificial worship that has been so explicitly denied by Śaivism in the *Sātāpatha Brāhmaṇa*. The Śaiva *āgamas* laid great stress on sincerity of devotion rather than to ceremonies involving the recital of *mantrās* and the offering of oblations. That the devotees of Śiva were drawn from all classes and castes of people would show that they did not observe the caste system of the Vedic adherents. These philosophical undercurrents of Śaivism were more acceptable and pleasing to the lay men in comparison to the rigid austerities and practices of the Jains.

The most notable effect of the *bhakti* on Śaivism had been a spurt in the iconographical form of Lord Śiva as *Vinādhara*, *Somaskanda*, *Gangādhara*, *Liṅgodhbhava*, *yoga Dakṣhināmūrti* and *Tirpurantakamūrti*. These gave an experimental form for the artist to take to the masses, their adorable god in all His varying and vibrant forms- as protector of all virtues and destroyer of evil. Though Śaivism is not against asceticism, it preferred to combine the aspect of *yōga* with

Bhoga as is reflected in the iconography of *Somaskanda* that came to adore every Śaiva temple from the reign of Parameshavarman¹³⁷.

The greatest contribution of the *bhakti* had been its rise as a legitimising instrument for the empire building activities for the Pallavas. This was possible because of their strong identification with the rising Śaiva sect and temple building spree. The process began with Mahendravarman I who excavated magnificent temples dedicated to the Trinity such as the Mandagapattu rock cut shrine. His Siyyamangalam, Dalavanur, Mamandur, Pallavararam edifices are eloquent testimony to the attempt at raising Śaivism as the unparalleled religion in Tamilakam. His successor Narasimhavarman I Mamalla is credited with the creation of the marvelous architectural works at Mahabalipuram, his Port City. Then came Mahendravarman II and Parameshvaravarman I who were equally responsible for the propagation of Saivism through their support to the establishment of magnificent structural temples and sculptures. The latter especially, a staunch Śaiva¹³⁸ built the famous Vidyāvinīta-Pallava-Paramēśvara-griham at Kuram which according to the Siṛṛambakkam inscription may represent the early attempts in the construction of stone structural temples¹³⁹. Equally glorious in the Śaiva history is the reign of Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha who is immortalised in history for the magnificent temple for Siva known as the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram. He continued the tradition of excavating rock-cut caves at Saluvankuppam, the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram, and the Talapurisvara temple at Panamalai¹⁴⁰. It was not just the construction of edifices but also the amount of sculptural innovation that characterised the period. The sculptures of Somaskanda in the numerous Śiva temples, the Krishna *līlas* as seen at Mahabalipuram etc., played a vital role in attracting the attention of the masses and in turn gaining popularity to the brahmanical sects.

Thus for about 200 years of the time span between Mahendravarman I and Nandivarman Pallavamalla, we see the proliferation of rock-cut and structural temples dedicated in majority to Śiva and also for Vishnu. The monarchs vied with each other in constructing large temples and providing large-scale endowments of land as gift to these religious institutions that in turn marked their emergence as powerful religious and economic institutions and centre for social and cultural activities.

Unlike the Śaivite saints, the *ālvārs* connected the sacred place of Vishnu with the northern and western part of India such as Salagrama, Kedarinarayana, Dwaraka and Naimisharanya and Puri Jagannatha¹⁴¹. Many of their literary compositions though in *nāyika-nāyaka bhava* and were strong reminders of the *Sandēsa Kāvya*s of classical Sanskrit literature¹⁴², could not find a ready acceptability with the commoners of the Tamil land who found relating to 'Saivism' much suitable and in tune with their culture and surrounding.

In conclusion, with the rise of the bhakti movement the cult of Siva and Vishnu was amalgamated with the gods and goddesses of the *Tīnai* regions and in the process influencing the life and thought of the Tamils. This process was necessary as Iyengar says

“...the Tamils were incurable optimists in that they did not regard the joys that providence has provided for men in this world as sinful in themselves, and that they did not consider that the objects of the senses existed only to be renounced: hence developed amongst them poetry of the most realistic type”¹⁴³.

2.9.A Impact of *bhakti* on Jainism

As has been noted above Jainism received a brief set back due to the rise of *bhakti* movement. No trace of patronage to Jainism or any evidence to their activities is known till the reign of Nandivarman II.

Jainism from the time of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla begins a slow rise as is indicated by the numerous inscriptions that have been found from Tondaimandalam. This was a deliberate incorporational tactic of Pallavamalla to be seen as the most devoted *bhakta* of all gods including those of the Jains so as not to antagonise their close political relations with Jain chiefs such as the Mutturaiyars and the Gangavadi rulers and numerous other chieftains¹⁴⁴.

In a related development, the *bhakti* movement provided a new fillip to Jainism. It underwent certain modification to suit the needs of the time and to maintain its presence in the society when a conducive atmosphere was provided. In the post – *bhakti* phase, Jaina centres which were hitherto simple caverns with stone beds, came to be embellished with sculptures. By assimilation of various brahmanical deities, Jainism increased its pantheon. Structural temples were built on the lines of the brahmanical shrines and they in turn received donations and grants for their maintenance. A detailed study of these developments would be made under the subtitle ‘Jainism in the Post-Bhakti period’.

PART B

JAINISM IN THE POST – BHAKTI PERIOD

The *bhakti* ideology checked the progress and influence of both Buddhism and Jainism. The devotional hymns and the profuse incorporation of mythological stories increased the prestige and glory of Śaivism and Vaishnavism.

This led to the popularity of the two sects. In this environment Buddhism could not face the severe opposition and lost its glorious position that it once enjoyed. The earlier well entrenched Jaina religion though suffered great disadvantages at the hands of the *bhakti* ideologists from the 7th century AD revamped its earlier method to spread Jainism and to protect its religious and sociological interests. This brought about drastic changes in Jaina religious practices and monastic organisations. But inspite of these changes the Jains never compromised on the basic tenants for which they stood for.

From the time of Nandivarman Pallavamalla II, Jains began to resurrect and make their presence felt. Thus the period from c.740 AD, according to the epigraphic evidences, witnessed an active build up of Jaina institutions, their temples, sculptures and their literature. There are archaeological and literary evidences to substantiate this revival.

It is to be seen that the resurrection of Jainism was not because of the end of the *bhakti* movement or the acceptance of Jainism as it was in the pre-*bhakti* phase. Currents and crosscurrents, both political and sociological played a vital role in the re-growth of Jainism.

2.1.B Political causes to the revival of Jainism

The Jain religion right through the course of its history has been able to influence the political establishment, drawing people from the *kshatriya* class. They, as has been seen earlier had succeeded in winning over a significant number of followers drawn from all sections of the society thus effecting all branches- political, economic, social or spiritual. It particularly succeeded in drawing patronage from the rulers and chieftains. Politics and religion being indispensable was very much evident during the time of the Pallavamalla. In the political history of the Pallavas,

the end of the reign of Parameshvaraman II (c.728-731 AD) created confusion and anarchy necessitating the election of his successor¹⁴⁵. In the aftermath of this scenario, Nandivarman II Pallavamalla, was appointed as his successor in c.732 AD. Pallavamalla had to encounter invasions at the hands of the Chalukya Vikramaditya II and by the Pandya king Rajasimha and coupled with this were the constant skirmishes with the feudatories. Thus in order to pacify these potential trouble makers, there is a shift from the earlier monolithic kingly domination to a scenario in which the kingship was perceived as being shared among powerful, locally-based persons and this period is considered as the period of 'incorporative kingship'¹⁴⁶.

The political compulsion of Pallavamalla aided in the resurrection of Jainism. This was done so as not to antagonise the close political relation he had established or sought to establish with the Jaina chiefs such as those from Gangavadi, Pugalalaimangalam etc. The Ganga patronage to Jainism in Tondaimandalam started from the time of Pallava Simhavarman III. This continued and helped in the growth of Jainism even during the 9th century AD as is proved by the archaeological evidence from Jain centres such as Siyyamangalam, Vallimalai and Armamalai. The chieftain of Pugalalaimangalam was a staunch Jain as will be seen in the following chapter in the context of ancient Jaina centres located in present Vellore district such as Chinnalapakkam. Royal patronage to the sect was also necessitated to gain confidence and loyalty from the minor chieftains. Thus it is seen that political support from the time of Pallavamalla played a vital role in the resurrection of Jainism in Tondaimandalam.

Jainism in the 8th-9th centuries AD was also aided by the secular religious policies of the Pallava rulers such as Dantivarman I and Nripatunga. In spite of their brahmanical background they aided in the growth of Jainism. Numerous inscriptions found in Tondaimandalam are indications of the above fact.

2.2.B Social reasons to the resurrection of Jainism

The *bhakti* movement and its success had indicated the acceptance of a religion or a sect, if it fulfils the needs and aspiration of the people. The Jains, especially after their encounter with the *bhakti* proponents began to realise that it is not possible to attract people only on the basis of philosophy, doctrines and exposition of religious conduct. Something more was needed to sustain its hold over the society. Thus a need for transformation in the propagation of Jaina doctrines to the laity was felt.

Jainism, had laid great stress on its strict discipline of non-materialism and viewed life of a householder as a stage of preparation for the ascetic order. But in the post-*bhakti* phase there were concessions to carry out all worldly practices as far as this does not lead to violation of the Jaina doctrines. This made it more acceptable to the masses. None of the post-*bhakti* Jaina centres of the Pallava period over Tondaimandalam show inscriptions glorifying *Sallekhanā* as was earlier seen at Parayanpattu and Tirunatharkunru. Though it cannot be said that this unique practice did not exist at all in the Tondaimandalam, but it nevertheless would be suffice to state that such harsh practices no longer find mention in the Jain archaeological finds.

Another notable manner through which Jainism was able to regain its hold over the society in Tondaimandalam in the aftermath of the *bhakti* was by maintaining an equilibrium among all sections of the society and by admitting all sections of the society without any distinction of caste or creed. It decried class distinctions and privileges and tried to create a society of equals for the lay followers. This is indicated by the inscriptions from sites like Chinnapalapakkam, Kilarasumpattu etc. which speak of contributions made by

people belonging to all sections of the society, such as the royal figures, traders and agriculturists.

The activities of the Jains in the field of education and other allied activities became notable especially in the aftermath of the *bhakti*. Epigraphs and structural edifices are indication of this influence.

FOOTNOTES

1. V.Venkayya, Religion of the Pallavas, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Department*, Southern Circle, Madras, 1906-1907, p.234.
2. *E. I.* Vol.6. pp. 84-88.
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CHAPTER III

[illegible]

PLACES WHERE FIELD WORK HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN

1. Mamandur
2. Tondur
3. Parayanpattu
4. Tirunatharkunru
5. Tiruparruttikunram
6. Vedal
7. Tirunarungondai
8. Kilsattamangalam
9. Panchapandavarmalai
10. Karuppankunru
11. Olakkur
12. Kilarasumpattu
13. Perumandur
14. Chinnapalapakkam
15. Siyyamangalam
16. Vallimalai
17. Armamalai
18. Siruvakkam
19. Kiraipakkam
20. Agalur
21. Alagramam
22. Tiruvadigai

23. Tirupattiripuliyur
24. Dalavanur
25. Uranithangal
26. Tyagadurgam
27. Tiruchchirappalli
28. Gunadharichchuram (near Tiruvadigai)
29. Narayanapuram
30. Melkudalur

**JAIN SITES IN RELATION TO SAIVA CENTRES IN
TONDAIMANDALAM- DATING TO THE TIME OF THE
PALLAVAS**

1. Dalavanur
2. Siyyamangalam
3. Tirupattiripuliyur
4. Tiruvadigai
5. Siruvakkam
6. Tiruchchirappalli
7. Tondur (with Vaishnavism)
8. Mamandur
9. Gunadharichchuram
10. Panchapandavarmalai
11. Tiruparruttikunram (3kms off Kanchipuram)

**EPIGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION IN JAIN CENTRES DATING TO
PALLAVA PERIOD**

JAIN CENTRES	KING	DATE OF RECORD
1. Mamandur	-	4 th AD
2. Tondur	-	4 th AD
3. Parayanpattu	-	6 th AD
4. Tirunatharkunru	-	6 th AD
5. Tiruparruttikunram	Simhavarman	540 AD (C.P)
6. Vedal	Nandivarman II	745 AD
7. Tirunarungondai	Nandivarman II	745 AD
8. Kilsattamangalam	Nandivarman II	745 AD
-do-	-do-	778 (2)
-do-	-do-	787 AD
-do-	Kampavarman	876 AD
9. Panchapandavarmalai	Nandivarman II	781 AD
10. Agalur	Nandivarman II	781 AD
-do-	-	8 th AD
11. Karuppankunru	-	8 th AD
12. Olakkur	-	8 th AD
13. Tondur	Dantivarman	803 AD

14. Kilarasumpattu	Nandivarman III	850 AD
15. Perumandur	Nandivarman III	866 AD
16. Chinnapalapakkam	Nripatungavarman	869 AD
17. Siyyamangalam	Rajamalla II	893 AD (2)
18. Vallimalai	Rajamalla II	893 AD
19. Armamalai	-	9 th AD
20. Siruvakkam	-	9 th AD
21. Kiraipakkam	-	9 th AD
22. Melkudalur	Nripatungavarman	967 AD

CHART FOR JAINA VESTIGES IN TONDAIMANDALAM

Cave resorts having stone beds	Cave resorts having sculptures	Centres with Structural temples	Centres yielding epigraphical records	Centres referred to in the literature	Centres with loose sculptures
Mamandur			-do-		
Tondur	-do-				
		Kilsattamangalam	-do-		
Chinnapalapakkam			-do-		
Uranithangal					
			Kilarasumpattu		
				Tiruvadiagai	-do-
				Tiruppathiripuliyur	
Dalavanur					
	Thyagadurgam				
		Perumandur	-do-		
			Parayanpattu		
		Thiruparruttikunram	-do-		
	Thirunatharkunru		-do-		
	Vallimalai		-do-		
	Siyyamangalam		-do-		
			Kirapakkam		
			Siruvakkam		
	Armamalai		-do-		
Narayanapuram					
		Tirunarungondai			
	Karuppankunru		-do-		
		Agalur	-do-		
			Vedal		
				Kanchipuram	-do-
			Olakkur		-do-
Melkudalur			-do-		
					Venkunram

JAINA CENTRES OF THE PALLAVA PERIOD

(With special reference to ancient Saivite centres
and art and architecture of the Jains)

The Jaina centres represent the development of the religion in the course of its existence in the Tondaimandalam. It is generally held that after the *bhakti* movement, the progress of Jainism in Tamil country was considerably reduced. The survey of the numerous villages in Tondaimandalam and the archaeological evidences gleaned from these sites in the form of natural caverns with stone beds, inscriptions, sculptures and temples aided by literary evidences would indicate that the *bhakti* movement in reality did not mark the end of Jainism. Contrary to this, there are numerous evidences that would indicate that Jainism had continued to maintain its hold in the society and the adherents continued to revere it inspite of the *bhakti* wave.

Field study undertaken at the Jain sites has thrown immense light on the chronological development of these places of worship. They provide invaluable insight into the religious practices of the Jain adherents, their social and economic status during the period under study. Many of these places are even to the present day strong bastions of Jaina adherents. In the light of the evidences collected from these ancient Jaina centres, it would be apt to state that Jainism at every stage of its trying circumstances, assimilated and accommodated such features with which it could secure its social standing. The most notable among these is temple worship and introduction of sculptures.

The continued support that these Jaina institutions received from the dynasties such as the Western Gangas and the Rashtrakutas assisted in the consolidation of Jainism in Tondaimandalam. This was possible because of the

secular religious policies of the Pallava monarchs, which aided in the growth of Jainism. Jaina centers such as Vallimalai, Siyyamangalam received donations and patronage from the Ganga monarchs.

The monks of Jaina institutions from Karnataka such as those belonging to the Yapaniya Sangha, the various *gaṇas* and *anvayas* also played a major role in the propagation of Jaina ideals in Tondaimandalam. At the same time the Western Gangas and the Rashtrakutas patronised and propagated Jaina ideologies under the secular religious policies of Pallava monarchs.

Jaina art and architecture had attained rich maturity over the northern part of India and over the Karnataka region, as were seen at Udayagiri, Khandagiri, Ellora, Aihole, and Badami. But at the same time Jaina art in Tamil land in its earlier phase was conspicuously simple. This is mainly attributed to the strict doctrines of the Jainism that was practiced by the Digambaras monks and the lay adherents. As has been previously dealt with in detail, the early Jain monuments are characterised by simple caverns located far away from the local habitations. These were provided with stone cut beds and were devoid of any sculptures or artwork. The early abodes of the Jains were referred to as *kañcana*, *pāli*, *kal*, *pā*, *uṇai*, *tāna*, *cayana*, and *munṛu*¹.

It was this simplicity together with their rigid philosophy that came under attack during the *bhakti* phase. Hence close to the 8th century AD there is the growth of Jaina temples and sculptures. The characteristic features of these components are being dealt with in the following pages along with the description of the Jain centers dating their origin to the time of the Pallavas.

The archaeological vestiges of Jain history dating from the time of the Pallavas are found throughout ancient Tondaimandalam that comprise the present

districts of Vellore, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram, Villuppuram, Cuddalore, Perumbalur and Tiruchchirappali in Tamil Nadu. Located in geographical landscapes as varied as hillocks with natural caverns and plain agricultural lands, the earliest of these relics are in the form of stone beds with Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions found either within the natural caverns or on open rock surfaces.

Apart from the places, which have provided direct evidence to support its link with Jains in the ancient period, there are also number of indirect references about Jaina villages in the inscription recorded. All this would indicate beyond doubt the extent of Jaina influence.

Apart from the natural caves with inscriptions, numerous Jain centres that traces its history to the period of the Pallavas has yielded Jaina images in the form of loose sculptures, caves with *mandapas* and the structural temples. These structural temples were built on the lines of their brahmanical counterparts on large land area. Some of the ancient structural temples dating to the 6th-7th centuries AD and have undergone modification in due course of time are seen at Tirupparutikunram, Perumandur, Kilsattamangalam and Tirunarungondai.

Art is the medium of expression of religion and its growth is the reflection of the growing needs of the latter. And more particularly, the extent of art elements of a religion is the reflection of the growth of the religion itself. Art², as stated by Edith Tomory:

“... starts from something tangible or concrete, perceived by the senses, and leads on to spiritual understanding by the mind and enjoyment by the heart or soul. Thus it helps a great deal to educate-to lead the human spirit from material perception to spiritual understanding and love through the attraction of joy in beauty-or, as the philosophers would say, from beauty to truth and goodness”.

The richness of Indian art and architecture dates back to thousands of years and archaeological evidences has brought to light the development of Indian art and architecture. The magnificent creations of art by the Pallavas gave an all round boost to the Jains to imbibe the fine art traditions. It induced in the Jains, particularly over the Tondaimandalam region to accept Jaina art and architectural elements from outside the Tamil land.

In this reconstruction of the history of Jain centers and in the study of the development of art in these places, the inscriptions have played a vital role and offer the study of architectural development, royal donations, grants made by lay devotees and economic and social status of these institutions.

3.1 Architecture of the Jaina temples

The architectural style of Jaina temples is similar to those of their brahmanical counterparts. They are generally rectangular or elongated in plan and are divided into different components.

The cell where the main deity or Tīrthaṅkara is consecrated is known as the *garbhagriha* (Sanctum sanctorum). This is fronted by an *antarāla* (vestibule) which again is fronted by a *mukhamandapa*. The *mukhamandapa* is generally the largest hall in the temple.

A *Sikhara*, decorated with sculptures of Tīrthaṅkaras, the *yakshas* and the *yakshis* tops the *garbhagriha*. The entire temple complex or Jinalaya is fronted by a tall, free standing pillar designated as *mānasthamba*. The images of Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras facing the four directions are called *Chaumukhas* and are placed on top of the *mānasthambas*. In course of time when the *yaksha* and *yakshi* gained in importance, they came to accompany the Jina atop the *mānasthambas* and at times even replaced him³.

The Jaina temples are provided with a first *tala* over the main shrine. The finest and earliest example of this style is seen at the Chandraprabha temple at Tiruparruttikunram near Kanchipuram. The shrine proper of the temple has remained unused for centuries as such they remain locked. The first *tala* of the temple houses the stucco image of Chandraprabha. It is not exactly known as to what prompted the closure of the ground *talā* and its lying desolate.

The temple complex is enclosed within a *prākara* wall. These temples are characterised by the Vimana type of temple, with the *sikhara* resting on the superstructure raised over the sanctum and with *prākara* around and *gōpura* entrance as well³. Many of the extent Jain temples in Tondaimandalam as the inscriptions suggest date their origin to the time of the Pallavas. Even to the present day, though they have undergone tremendous alterations, continue to play a vital role in the life of the Jain adherents. Tucked in the safe environs of the villages dotting Tondaimandalam, these temples are manifestations of the distinct culture, iconography, ritualism and philosophy of the Jains. While describing the Jain places of worship Shah states:

.....the multitude of calm faces, the strong silence and emptiness, unaccompanied by any sign of neglect or decay, the bewildering, repetition of shrines and deities in this aerial castle, suggest nothing built with human purpose but some petrified saint world⁴.

3.2 Iconography of Jaina divinities

Jainism took a lead in image worship. The Jaina art of Tondaimandalam offer the best source material for Jaina iconography. A study of the Jaina places of worship indicate that perhaps in the Indian system of religion, none other than Jainism had drawn so heavily on the idea of a image in

contemplation⁵. In the central theme in the Jaina iconography is the Tīrthaṅkara who is always shown either standing in *Kayōtsarga* or seated in *padmāsana* or *ardhapadmāsana*. The purpose for the Jains to represent the Tīrthaṅkaras these images are for the lay men to contemplate upon and persuade him to endeavor him to attain eternal bliss rather than hanker after material gains⁶.

These sculptures were accompanied by inscriptions that state the name of the its executioner, the donor, the type of grants et al. The sculptures in various places of worship, plus the inscriptional evidence, suggest that in later Pallava times image worship became a common practice among the Digambaras of Tamil region. These sculptures are carved on the façade of the natural caverns-the earliest inhabitation of the Jaina monks and in structural temples. The sculptures are of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras, Bahubali, the *yaksha* and *yakshi*.

3.2.1 Tīrthaṅkaras

The Supreme object of veneration in Jainism is referred to as a Tirthankara, a Jina or an Arhat. According to the *Manasara*, the Silpa text of the 6th century AD the image of the Tīrthaṅkara is to be shown with two arms and a pair of eye and the head should be clean shaven without the *ūśnisa* (top-knot)⁷. The image should be carved either in the sitting or in the standing posture. They are not to be attired with any ornaments and no clothes on any part of the body. In the sitting posture, the Jina crosses his legs and places his hands in *dhyāna mudra* with the palms upturned on his heels. His sitting posture is either in *padmāsana* or in *ardha-padmāsana*. He is not even allowed to turn his face either to the left or to the right⁸. In the standing posture the Jina's feet are placed evenly with no flexion's on the body and his hands are hung loosely on either side of his thighs without touching them. This standing meditative posture is called *kayōtsarga*. Thus all the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras have identical features. Only the first

Tīrthaṅkara, Adhinatha, is shown with his hair spread on his shoulders. The seventh Tīrthaṅkara Suparsvanatha, the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara Parshvanatha is endowed with serpent canopies. The *yakshi* and *yaksha* who have distinctive names, attributes, *vāhanas* and roles attend to each of the 24 Tīrthaṅkaras.

Of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, Rshabhanatha, Chandraprabha, Neminatha, Parsvanatha and Mahavira together with their attendant deities became very popular in Tondaimandalam during the Pallavas as are evidenced by their sculptures found throughout the region. These sculptures of Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras are carved on the facade of their natural caverns, on the walls of the cavern and placed within structural temples. Though the sculptures carved in first two categories remain well preserved even to the present day, the case is different in regard to the last mentioned category. This may be because of the use of perishable materials such as wood and stucco in carving the sculptures of Jaina divinities to be place in sanctum sanctorum.

The sculptures, adhering to the strict principle of nudity as practised by the Digambaras, are devoid of clothing or any ornamentation. Unlike the post 12th century sculpture of the Tīrthaṅkaras in Tamil Nadu, the early Tīrthaṅkara images of the Pallava period do not have the characteristic *lanchana* or cognizant symbol. Hence at it becomes difficult to identify the Tīrthaṅkara. Equally conspicuous is the absence of the *Śrīvatsā*⁹.

A majority of Jina sculptures of Pallava period depict Mahavira, and Rshabhanatha and Parsvanatha. The favourite theme among the artists of Pallava period has been the image of Parsvanatha and the depiction of the *Kamathopasarga*. These are seen even to the present day at Karuppankunru and Siyyamangalam. One reason for this could be because Parsvanatha with his close resemblance with Siva and Vishnu (the former with the snake as his garland and

the latter with the snake canopy in his Anantasayi form) provided a close similarity with its brahmanical counterparts so as to retain its hold over the people.

The images of Bahubali also received much importance from the artist. His image along with Rshabhanatha and Mahavira indicate the popularity of his cult. He is generally shown flanked by his sisters Brahmi and Soundari on either side and stands in the *Kayōtsarga* posture with creepers entwining his legs and *kukūta śarpa* at the foot level. A fine example of this type of sculpture is seen at Siyyamangalam where the artist introduced certain elements such as Indra riding over his Iravatha and a couple witnessing the severe penance of Bahubali.

3.2.2 Jaina Yaksha and Yakshis

The object of worship in *Jinālaya* is normally one of Tirthankaras. According to the Jaina belief, Indra appoints one *yaksha* and *yakshi* to serve as attendants, upon each of the Tirthankaras. The *yaksha* would be on the right side and *yakshini* on the left and these together came to be called as *Sāsanadevatās* or attendant spirits¹⁰. Though they are attendant deities but nevertheless play a vital role in Jaina pantheon. The gradual growth of the status of the *yakshas* and *yakshis* in Jainism is equally interesting. We find more and more *yakshas* and *yakshis* attaining cult status. Some of the attendant deities became very popular and enjoyed independent status. Separate niches and shrines were dedicated to them as seen at Panchapandavarmalai, Kilsattamangalam. Among the most popular *yakshi* was Ambika. She with her children and lady attendant were depicted in separate niches found throughout. This established a social chord with the people at large and helped in the social and religious significance of the Jains.

3.3. Jaina Paintings

Another distinctive feature of Jaina art is to be noted in the field of paintings. The earliest trace of Jaina painting dating to the 8th-9th century AD, has been found from the natural cavern at Armamalai¹¹. The tempera technique have been used for executing the work of art. It is the *Samavaṣarana* scene that has been beautifully depicted on the wall ceiling of the cavern.

The Digambara Jainism in Tondaimandalam has definitely developed certain special characteristics in architecture, sculpture and painting through the ages. It has its own share of contribution rich in variety and distinctly individualistic in styles.

A chronological description of the sites to have yielded Jaina vestiges or referred to as Jain centres in literature and inscriptions are given below so as to form a comprehensive social and cultural history of the place. Along with these sites, those related to Śaivism such as Tiruvadiagai, Tirupattiripuliyur and Gunadhareechuram which have been especially sung in the hymns of Tirunāvukkaracar has been described. They help in studying the inter-religious co-existence in the times under study.

DALAVANUR

Noted in the art history of Tamil Nadu for the magnificent rock cut temple of Satrumallēśvarālaya (*PLATE II*) by Mahendravarman I¹², Dalavanur is a tiny hamlet located 15 km south of Gingee on the Gingee-Villuppuram highway. From here, the village is 5 km towards the east. On the eastern part of the village is a chain of hillock in the east-west direction and on the southern face of the hillock the rock cut temple has been excavated. Much before the Pallava artists found the suitability of the place for executing their architectural skills, the Jaina

ascetics had inhabited the place as would be indicated by stone workmanship found within the vicinity of the rock cut temple.

Towards the east of the rock cut temple, a flight of steps, which can hold only one foot at a time, has been cut on the face of the rock that leads one to the natural shelter on the top. This rock shelter is approximately 60 feet high above ground level and is formed by an overhanging boulder. This rough rock surface has been chiseled smooth as to form a stone bed.

The stone bed measures 137.5 cm in length and 37.5 cm in breadth and has been chiseled in the east – west orientation. Towards the east of this is a cistern formed by the natural spring originating from the top of the hillock. Its natural ambience and distance from the mainstream of society provided an ideal ground for the Jain ascetics to inhabit the place and indulge in their religious practices unhindered and unaffected by outside influence.

The proximity of Dalavanur with places such as Sirukadambur, Neganurpatti, Tondur and Uranithangal have yielded stone beds and inscriptions that would establish that these regions were active areas of the Jain monks since the 6th-7th century AD. Due to their activities, Jainism was well received in these parts of the region and as a result of which it enjoyed royal support and numerous grants at the hands of both the royalty and lay followers. On similar grounds the stone bed at Dalavanur would suggest its occupation by the monks of the Jain order. Though there is absence of any lithic record, the rock steps that has been so painstakingly cut on the rock surface would indicate the reverence held by these ascetics in the society that prompted the latter to make provisions for their comfort and stay.

As an aftereffect of the *bhakti* movement that brought about social and religious metamorphosis, Dalavanur's natural and social ambience which till then was home to the Jaina ascetics, was endowed with the brahmanical rock cut temple in the 7th century AD. By constructing the more ornate and architecturally beautiful monument, its executioners aimed at enforcing the presence of their religious identity and doctrines.

These apart, Dalavanur provide a useful evidence to indicate that in the early 6th-7th centuries AD, Jainism and its adherents were successful in influencing the life and thought of its inhabitants.

TONDUR

Tondur, lying in the midst of ancient Jaina centers of Agalur and Vedal, preserves the vestiges of Jainism dating to the 3rd-4th century AD and even to the present times it is home to many Jain families. The geography of the place is a mixture of low lying agricultural fields and hillocks which rise to a height of 250 to 300 feet above ground level. The latter is a conglomerate of boulders which form into natural caverns and shelters and it was this which was found suitable by the ancient jaina monks who inhabited these caverns far away in seclusion from the day to day routine of the materialistic man.

Towards the south of Tondur village is one such hillock the Panchnampadi. At its foothill there is a huge natural cavern at the entrance to this cavern on the sloping rock floor is a Tamil Brahmi inscription. This inscription dated to the 3rd-4th century AD¹³ states that at the instruction of Elankayipan the villagers of Akalūr made provision for three stone beds to be cut. The mason who executed them was Mōci. A significant feature of the inscription is that the

numeral 'three' is indicated by three horizontal parallel strokes and this is perhaps the only Tamil-brahmi inscription where a numeral occurs.

The three stone beds referred to in the record are carved towards the south east of the inscription. They are chiseled in the north-south orientation and are provided with pillow lofts. These stone beds have an average measurement of 168 cm in length and 67 cm in width. Elankiyapan of the inscription is stated to be the monk of high repute and it was at his instance that the villagers of Akalur made the stone beds¹⁴. This contention cannot be accepted because it is against the basic tenants of the Jaina monastic rules which forbids the monks from making any command or asking for any sort of comfort from the lay adherents of the faith. Here Elankiyapan is to be taken to be the chieftain who could command his subjects to make certain provisions and in this case for the Jaina monks because he probably was an adherent of the same faith and the villagers of Agalur too had Jaina leanings. As for the choice of Tondur in executing the gift the latter with its natural resources would have been the ideal location for the same.

The passage within this cavern leads one to the top of the hillock where there is a rock shelter underneath which there are a set of two stone beds measuring 159 cm in length and 64 cm in width. The number of stone beds and inscription at the hillock would affirm that it was inhabited by monks who commanded wide reverence among the lay adherents.

Away from the hillock and towards the south of the village proper, there is an inscription engraved on the boulder referred to as Vinnamparai. The inscription is dated in the 6th regnal year of the Pallava King Dantivarman corresponding to 801 AD¹⁵. Of much religious and social value it records the gift of fourteen *kalanju* of gold to the temple of Errukunranar Bhattari in merit of

Udradi and Nambi both of who died in an encounter. The gold gifted was placed in charge of the assembly of Aruvagur, at present a small village near Gingee of the same name¹⁶, in Singapuranādu and was to be utilized for feeding the pilgrims who undertook pilgrimage to the temple.

There are no sculptural or structural that could be identified with the ruins of the temple for Erruk-kunranar Bhattari who has been referred to in the inscription. Due to the occurrence of 'Bhattari' it is undoubtedly be taken to be a shrine for the Jaina *yakshi* 'Padmavati'. Udaradi and Nambi were the warriors who, in the light of the Agalūr inscription of Vijayaditya, died in the military encounter between the two chieftancies.

As is the case with the natural resorts of the Jaina monks, the Panchanampadi cavern too was devoid of any sculptures in the earlier phase of its occupation but in the subsequent phases especially during the 8th-9th century AD sculptures began to be introduced in these caverns. Towards the south of the stone bed at 60 cm high above the floor surface of the cavern a niche has been cut on the cave wall. This relief image represent Parasvanatha seated on a lion pedestal in the ardha-padmāsana posture with his arms placed on the crossed legs (*PLATE III A*). The lion pedestal is inserted within two horizontal bars and in between them are the vertical bars which are alternated with *Sim̐has*. The sculpture has broad shoulders and a well defined body, with features of the face not clearly known because the sculpture has not been chiseled deep. The Tīrthaṅkara's head is canopied by a five hooded snake canopy which has its fangs covering a wide space. The rock above this has been cut as to accommodate the semi-circular shape of the snake hood. This sculpture on the basis of its style is dated to the 8th century AD¹⁷.

Away from these natural caverns and at the entrance to the village is seen a huge rock cut rectangular slab and on it is carved an image of Anntasayi Vishnu, that is Vishnu lying on the five hooded snake which form a bed rest by coiling his body and offers shelter to the Supreme with the hoods (*PLATE III B*). Here the rock slab has been provided with a square nich in the central part and their extremes horizontal lines hve been cut on either side. The square niche on one part have been so cut that it could fit in the fangs of the snake. The relief of Vishnu shows him lying with ease on the snake by placing his stretched left hand on the snake hood and the right is slightly raised and is in *Kataka mudra*. The image is adorned with the a waist dress that has been so tied that the tuft on the sides falls on either side and folds of this and the waist ornament fall in front majestically. The Yagnopavita is represented thick and is held by a belt like ornament. The broad haras, arm band and bangles all studded with pearls add gracefulness to the image. The image is crowned with a conical crown and has an oval face with patra kundlas falling on either sides of his shoulder. The image in style and in ornamentation exhibits all the features of the Pallava workmanship that is seen conspicuously at Mahabalipuram and other centres. A notable feature in the sculpture is the absence of the coils of the snake which here has been substituted by cutting the rock surface to serve the purpose of a bed rest. The six snake hoods have been realistically portrayed. Wht distinguishes this panel from the other Anantasāyi form of Vishnu is the absence of Brahma who is generally represented rising out of the navel of Vishnu. Thus on basis of the style and theme of sculpturing the image on the lines of a rock cut cave the image of Vishnu is dated to 8th century AD. At about 150 meters west of the image is another huge granite slab that has been shaped in the form of Garuda but due to natural actions no features of this figure can be known. This would have once fronted the image of Vishnu but in course of time out of neglect it would have been dislocated.

During the 5th regnal year i.e AD 969 of Parakesarivarman the Chola ruler provisions were made for the lighting lamp in the temple of Kidanda Perumal¹⁸. But no such records is available for the Pallava period.

An interesting point arise form the sociological and religious point while taking into consideration both the image of Jaina Parsvanatha and of Vaishnaviite Anantasayivishnu. On the basis of the style the latter would have been introduced later to the Parsvanatha relief. Since Tondur was a strong domain of the Jains since the early centuries of the christian era in the aftermath of the bhakti and a rejuvenation of the brahmanical faiths it became a necessasity on the behalf of the latter to utilize all means by which they could counter the Jaina influence. This has been so well shown by the existance of the two sculptures at Tondur, of which the Jain represents a non-materialistic world, renunciation of all wordly pleasures and without physical rest contemplating to attain moksha from this world, where as Vishnu represents with all worldly paraphernalia yet one which would take man to the Supreme divinity without taking the individual from the hustle and bustle and basic necessaties of life. Thus the images of divinities were utlized by the religious champions to win over mass support and adherence to their own individual support. Tondur thus succeeded in showing how without resorting to unsavoury practices of religious antagonism a healthy religious competition could be brought about by presenting to the lay man two images and leaving purely at his discretion as to which one he has to choose.

AGALUR

Agalur, an ancient Jaina village, whose origin goes back to the 3rd-4th centuries AD is, located 23 km north-east of Gingee in the Villupuram district. In this village even to the present day there are a majority of Jain families who

continue to practice and preserve their traditions and vestiges that reminds them of their antiquity.

The religious activity of its inhabitants is centered over the Rshabhanatha temple. The temple exhibits architectural features characteristic of the 16th century AD¹⁹. Built facing the east the temple is of modest proportion and has a *garbhagriha*, the *ardhamandapa*, the *mandapa*, which are fronted by the *Mānasthamba*.

The *garbhagriha* enshrines the image of Rshabhanatha, the first Jain Tirthankara. He is shown seated in the *ardha-padmāsana* posture with palms placed on the crossed legs. Engrossed in deep meditation, the sculpture has been carved with a semi-circular aureole, above that the *mukkudai* (three umbrellas) has been carved. On either side of the Tirthankara at the shoulder level, the *Chamradhāris* (the *chauri* bearers) are carved.

The *ardha mandapa* is a plain square structure where in few bronzes of the *yakshi* and the *yaksha* are kept. These bronzes fall within a time span of less than hundred years²⁰. The *mandapa* is square in shape and is supported by square pillars carrying cut corbels. Towards the north and south of the *mānasthamba* there is recently built miniature shrines for the *Kshētrapalaka* and Padmavati *yakshi* respectively. The temple complex is enclosed within a *prakara* wall which has a *gōpura* entrance on the eastern side.

Though at present the temple exhibits architectural features of the 16th-17th centuries AD, the Jaina antiquity of the village dates back to the early 3rd-4th centuries AD. This is corroborated by epigraph that has been found from the neighbouring village of Tondur. A Tamil-Brahmi inscription found within the

natural cavern states that the villagers of Agalur made endowments for cutting stone beds in favour of the Jaina monks who inhabited the place²¹.

At about half a kilometer south of the Rshabhanatha temple at Agalur, lying amidst the wild bushes is a rock, which the villagers refer to as *Vadakkukōṭtam*, on which a set of inscription is engraved. The earlier of the two inscription is dated to the 50th regnal year of the Pallava Nandivarman II, corresponding to 781 AD²². The inscription records the construction of a tank at Agalur by Kampayanar along with a donation of land that was to be irrigated, for the maintenance of the tank. He further provided a gift of three *nāḷi* of rice to the *bhatarar* or the Jaina monk who rendered services to the Jaina temple that was in existence at Agalur during the time. Here it would be not out of context to mention that tanks or water bodies are generally associated with the Jaina temples or those inhabited by the monks, apart from the practical purposes, also because it symbolises the *Samavasaraṇa*, a significant of this as seen at Sravanabelgola. Considering the inscription it is know that there existed a Jain temple, which in due course of time crumbled, and in the 16th century AD on its ruins a new temple was built for Rshabhanatha.

The second inscription on the basis of paleography is dated to the 8th century AD. It records that the Kampayan, also mentioned in the earlier record, destroyed Tondur on the orders of Vijayaditya but lost his life in the encounter²³. Hence its inferred from the inscription that Kampayan was the military commander of Vijayaditya, a chieftain who would have then ruled over the present Agalur and its neighbouring areas. A inscription expressing similar sentiment found from neighbouring Tondūr states that donations were made by Vinnakovaraiyar to the goddess temple in memory of Udradi and Nambi, who are said to have lost their life in a battle²⁴. It was in this encounter that Kampayan

would have lost his life. Vijayaditya and Vannakovaraiyar are to be taken the chieftains of two nearby regions and for reasons unknown would have turned bitter enemies leading to military encounter between the two.

Based on these epigraphs found from both Agalur it is known that Agalur was a seat of Jainism since early days. A few kilometer's from Agalur is Negnarpatti, which has yielded a Tamil-Brahmi inscription and stone beds that dates to the 3rd-4th centuries AD. Taking these regions too into consideration a holistic picture arises about the position of Jainism in the area, which suggests that it was a major faith that had penetrated deep into the religious psyche of the people since the early centuries of the Christian era. Apart from its religious importance, Agalur played as well a significant political role as a seat of power for the minor chieftains.

URANITHANGAL

On the Gingee-Tindivanam road, at a distance of about 4 km east of Gingee, is the village of Uranithangal. From the main road on its northern side at about half a kilometer through the habitation area is the Uranithangal *malai* otherwise known as *Jainapaddukkai* hillock that is approximately 200 feet above ground level (*PLATE IV A*). The hillock is a conglomeration of large and small boulders covered by wild vegetation. On its northern face at half way up the hillock is a natural cavern sheltered by huge boulders but there is no steps or any such provision to reach the cavern except near the northern entrance where there are about six steps cut on the boulders. The cavern has entrances on the northern as well as eastern sides and measures 12 meters in length and 15 meters in width.

On the southern entrance to the cavern, narrow steps have been cut on the boulders leading to the interior of the cavern. At its sloping surface right at the

entrance to the cave interior, a group of five stone beds have been cut in the east-west orientation. These stone beds have been polished smooth and are provided with pillow lofts and are chiseled in equal measurement of 192.5 cm in length and 80 cm in breadth.

Towards the west of these stone beds a raised platform which is square in shape. This platform measures 187.5 cm in length and 75 cm in breadth. On the surface of this platform a single line eight word inscription in Tamil script is engraved. It reads *Pārasēnar (va) ru*²⁵.

Towards the north of these, is a group of three stone beds lying in the east-west orientation and measuring 165 cm in length and 42.5 cm in breadth. They have pillow lofts with an average measurement of 12.5cms.

Further north of these is the third group of four stone beds which again have been chiseled in the east-west orientation with pillow lofts measuring 16.5 cm and having an average length of 165 cm and 47.5 cm in breadth.

At the eastern entrance to the cavern there are two stone beds which are without pillow lofts. Both of these are in the north-south orientation and measures 197cm in length and 50 cm in breadth.

In the interior of the cavern a group of three stone beds are noticed with and average measurement of 165 cm in length and 50 cm in breadth. The pillow lofts measure 12.5cm length and in keeping uniformity with the other stone beds these too has been done in the east-west orientation. These have started showing signs of weathering.

Apart from the single line inscription no other earlier period record is available from the site. The notably large number of stone beds together with the platform found at the entrance to the cavern would suggest that *San̥gha* of monks

stayed here with a religious teacher as their head who gave religious sermons. Gingee and its surrounding areas such as Dalavanur, Tirunatharkunru, Neganurpatti, Tondur, Agalur, Vedal et al were strong centers of Jainism since the 5th-6th centuries AD. Because of the close proximity of Uranithangal to these places went a long way in the occupation of the natural cavern at Uranithangal for the stay and practice of Jaina doctrines by the ascetics. The landscape of the region sustained the Jaina monks in their pursuit of their socio-religious duties.

Within the interior of the cavern the lotus symbols have been carved on the rock surface within which the *pādas* or footprints of the Jaina pontiffs has been chiseled (*PLATE IV B*). On their sides have been chiseled the holy symbols of the jains such as the *śvastika*, the *mukkudai*, and the mirror. A very recent inscription belong to 1976 AD states the name of the Jaina gurus Āchārya Nirmal Sagar, Āchārya Varadhamana Sagar and Santi Sagar. The surname of these pontiffs would suggest that they are all Śvētāmbara monks who unusually would have taken brief shelter in this ancient Jaina cavern and to immortalize this event the inscription were engraved. Thus, the cavern provides the only known instance in Tamil Nadu of Jaina ascetics of the present day having visited these cavern at inaccessible heights mainly to show their value for the religious remains of the past and in the process attempting to link the past with the present and to glorify the antiquity of their religion.

TIRUPPARUTTIKUNRAM

This is the ancient site in the history of Jainism with relation to the Pallavas. Tirupparutitikunram is located six kilometers south of Kanchipuram. There are two temples in this village dedicated to the Jaina divinities, namely Mahavira and Chandraprabha.

Mahavira Temple: (PLATE V A and PLATE V B) The temple, as indicated by the name is dedicated to the 24th Tirthankara Mahavira. The temple stands in all its glory even to the present day, but has no architectural elements characteristic of the Pallava period.

The antiquity of the temple traces back to the 550 AD. The Pallankoil Copper plate grant records the *pallichchandam* grant of the village of Amanserkkai (also called Sramansrama in Sanskrit) to the Vajranandi of Varadhamneesvara dharmatirtham²⁶. The copper plate dates the event to the time of Simhavarman III. Apart from this, the shrine also received the village of Damar as *pallichchandam*. The boundaries of these *pallichchandam* villages are demarcated.

A large temple complex, the temple consist of a *garbhariha*, a *mandapa* and larger *mukhamandapa*. Its built facing the east. The *garbhagriha* is a semi circular structure. Is enshrines the stucco image of Mahavira. In front of the this is the *Abhishhēka Vighraha* (image of ablutions). On the right side of the main shrine is a small sub-shrine for Dharmadevi. She is seated n a lion pedestal and is accompanies by her two children and lady attendant.

The temple has numerous bronze images of Brahma *yaksha*, Padmavati, Sarvahan Yaksha, Saraswati and Ambika.

The Sangeetha mandapa of the temple carries paintings of the Vijaynagar and Nayak period. They depict themes such as *Samavasraṇa*. On the southern part of the temple complex, in its outer *prākara* is a sub-shrine for Brahma *yaksha*. He is depicted as seated on an elephant. The *Sthala Vrksa* (sacred tree) of the temple is towards the west.

Two facts are gleaned from the inscriptions first, that Tiruparuttikunram was an early centre for Jaina proliferation. The place could have housed a Saṅgha

of Digambara monks is known by the fact that the recipient of the Pallankoil grant Vajranandi was a reputed monk belonging to the Nandi Sangha. The Sanghas are congregation of monks, who were responsible for the spread of Jaina doctrines among the laity. Moreover, the place is known as Varadhamanneesvara dharmatirtham or the Holy place of Vardhamana. The temple initially a congregation for the monks, would have received total immunity on accounts of its status as a *pallichandam*. That it received royal patronage since the time of the Pallavas and later by the Cholas and Vijaynagara rulers would indicate its social political and religious significance.

It continued to carry its religious functions, vis-à-vis the Saiva and Vaishanva temples that existed at Kanchipuram.

Chandraprabha temple (PLATE V C)

Towards the west of the Vardhamana temple is the Chandraprabha temple to the 7th Tirthankara Chandraprabha. The temple is of modest proportion and was built during the time of Rajasimha in the 8th Century AD.

The temple facing the west consists of two storeys. The ground floor of the temple carries the earliest surviving traces of Jaina temple architecture of the Pallava period²⁷. The *adhiṣṭāna* of the temple has the *tripatta kumuda* and *pattika*. Its walls are decorated with pilasters and at the corners are rampant *vyālas* or lions. All these are the characteristic Pallava style of architecture. The interior of the ground floor is sealed since time immemorial. Hence, a brick superstructure, in the form of a second story was built above. It enshrines a broken stucco image of Chandraprabha. The structure is surmounted by a *Nāgara vimāna*²⁸. The temple is at present in a dilapidated condition and is neither cared nor worshipped.

Both the above temples give the place its name of Jina Kanchi. At present there are few Jaina families. Nevertheless, these are the ancient places to provide ample proof to the growth and importance of Jainism in ancient Tondaimandalam. They with the characteristic *garbhagriha*, *mandapa*, *abhishēka vigrahas*, *mānsthamba*, *balipitha* etc are testimony to the acceptance of Brahmanical temple worship into mainstream Digambara tradition.

TIRUPATHIRIPULIYUR

Famous in the religious history of the Tamil land, Tirupathiripuliyur, the ancient city is located 4 km., south-west of Cuddalore in Cuddalore district. This ancient town has been a home first to the Jains who found a favourable hold in the place. Its antiquity is recorded in the numerous literatures dating from the 5th century AD to the 7th and 8th centuries AD.

The earliest mention of Tirupathiripuliyur as Patalika occurs in the 5th century AD Jain manuscript of *Lokavibhāga*. This is the earliest and only known work of its kind on cosmology that has so far been recovered from the Tamil land. Offering salutations to the Jinesvara in its opening verses, the manuscript consists of one thousand five hundred and thirty-six *anustabh slokas* on Jaina cosmography²⁹. The concluding portion of the manuscript states that it was a Sanskrit version of the Prakrit original and was copied by Muni Sarvanandin in the village of Patalika in Panarashtra³⁰. Therein it is also mentioned that the translation of the work was completed in the 22nd regnal year of the king of Kanchi, Simhavarman II, corresponding to 437 AD³¹.

Apart from providing valuable date at fixing the accession of the Pallava King, the composition of a work of this magnitude by a Jaina monk would emphasise that there would have been a monastery where works relating

to the propagation of Jaina doctrines were composed. These monasteries were home to the Jain monks of high repute and learning. The spread of its fame far and wide is further attested by the inscription from Śravanabelagola where in it is stated that the reputed monk Samanthabhadra visited the monastery at Pataliputram. This ancient Pataliputram monastery after an intensive research of literary and archaeological sources have been identified with Patalika and Tirupathiripuliyur of the 5th century AD literary work³². The fame of this monastic build up during the 7th Century AD is further gleaned through the *Periyapurāṇam* relating to the life of Appar or Tirunāvukkarasar who earlier in his life as Marulneekiyar had become a Jain and entered the Patliputra monastery. He later on went on to become the head of monastery and took the title of Dharmasēnar³³.

As for archaeological evidences, the relics of this ancient monastery is spread over an area near the foot hills of a hillock approximately 100 feet high. Not much is known about the architecture of these ruins for they lie buried underneath.

At two kilometre from these, is a small village of Pettai (*PLATE VI*). The researcher in the course of the field-work came across in this village an ancient idol of a Jain a divinity seated in the Padmāsana posture. It is at present placed under a tree is worshipped by the villagers as Vishnu and they perform rituals on this image.

The sculpture conforms to the Digambara style due to the absence of clothing. It has broad shoulders, a round face with elongated earlobes and curly hairdo. Considering the above evidences, and authenticity of both the Jain and Śaiva literary composition, it can be stated on firm grounds the a Jainism with its strong base in the monastic institution prevailed upon the religious beliefs and

social hierarchy of the ancient Tamil society. For this the credit would go to the early Pallava rulers who without hesitation of either political or religious partisanship let Jainism flourish in its own set conditions.

TIRUVADIGAI

An ancient Saiva stronghold, Tiruvadigai is located near Panruti in the Cuddalore district. The place is famous for its magnificent shrine for Śiva known as the Virataneesvara (**PLATE VII A**). The temple traces its antiquity to the 7th Century AD. It was at this shrine, according to the Tirunāvakkarcār Tēvarām, that Tirunāvukkarcar realised the glory of Śiva and became an ardent devotee of the lord. The legend has it that, Thiruvāukkaraccār as Marulneekiyar was Jaina adherent, was laid with severe stomachache which the Jaina fail in curing, and thereafter here he takes shelter at Tiruvadigai. Śiva cures him of his illness. In the aftermath of this Tirunāvukkarcar sings in praise of the lord and many of his Hymns (22-75)³⁴ were composed at the shrine. In these hymns he expresses his gratitude to lord Śiva for accepting him, but at the same time he expresses his regret for not to have realised the power and glory of lord Śiva earlier.

The temple is at present a large temple complex with massive *gopura* entrance and Vimanas. That the shrine has existed from the 7th century AD is indicated by a sub. Shrine for Tirunāvukkarcar (Appar) which is built facing the main shrine and is located right at the entrances. This would corroborate the legendary accounts about the composition of his hymns by Tirunavukkaracar (**PLATE VII B**).

The temple also provides interesting sculpture of Lord Buddha. It is placed in the outer *prākara* of the Virataneesvara temple. The sculpture represents Buddha, seated on the pedestal in the *ardhapadmāsana* posture with

palms placed one over the other in *dhyāna* posture. His hair is tied in a conical knot and the ears are long and elongated. The sculpture with its well defined features and style is datable to the 8th-9th century AD (**PLATE VII C**). The sculpture would have once formed a part of a Buddhist shrine, which no longer exists. It is ample to state that the Tiruvadigai and its environs also housed Buddhist and Jains along with Śaivites. A similar environment provided over Kanchipuram in the 7th – 8th centuries AD.

GUNADHAREECHURAM (PLATE VIII)

Gunadharechuram, is located about two kilometers from Tiruvadigai. The shrine here is dedicated to Lord Siva. It has been a focus of much discussion regarding Mahendra varman I and his religious conversion.

Regarding the architecture of the temple, it is a brick built shrine of modest proportion. It lies in a dilapidated and neglected state. The ceiling of the temple is built very low and the *mandapa* is divided into aisle and nave by the small round pillars. The sanctum sanctorum enshrines a 16 faceted Linga. Towards the right of the *mandapa* the sculptures of Dakshinamurthy and Surya.

The temple complex has brick built sub-shrines, which are at present empty. Based on the similarity of the name of the temple with the one of the *birudas* (titles) of Mahendravarma I, the Tiruchi inscription and on the basis of Sekkizhars *Periyapurānam* it taken to mean that the shrine that was built by Mahendravarma I after he destroyed the Pataliputra Jaina monastery. But this is not provided by archaeological or literary evidence.

As has been pointed out by K R Srinivasan, Tikrunāvukkaracar's *Tēvāram* makes no reference to the supposed event. Secondly archaeologically the field work proves, that it is a brick built temple. Even if the legend of

Periyapurānam has to be accepted, then how is it that bricks could be brought from a destroyed structure to build a brick structure. This is beyond logic and all know engineering techniques. The fact that the temple finds mention in the *Periyapurānam*, would suggest its glory during the 12th – 13th centuries AD.

SIYYAMANGALAM

Siyyamangalam is located 6 km east of the town of Desur in the Tiruvannamalai district. The western periphery of Siyyamangalam has a chain of hillocks with huge monolithic rock boulders and natural cavern.

At half a kilometer south on the hillock a flight of steps formed by the rock cut slabs leads one to the natural cavern referred to by the villagers as *Samana Parai* or *Samana Guhai*. As the name itself suggest this natural cavern was converted into a residential resort by the Jaina monks for their stay and propagation of Jainism since the 6th-7th century AD. Due to the activities of the Jaina monks, Jainism received strong support from the people of the region. It was with this intention of establishing a Brahmanical hold and counter the growing influence of the Jains that the rock-cut temple of Avanibhajana Pallaveshvaram dedicated to Lord Śiva was built near the Jaina cavern, at a later date.

The natural cavern has a deep horizontal drip line chiseled on face of the overhanging boulder that served as an outlet for draining rain water to prevent it from falling into the cavern. It is one of the constructive evidences to show that the Jaina monks who choose such far away natural zones inhabited the cavern. Above the drip line, a group of Jaina divinities are carved in bold relief representing the Tirthaṅkaras, the *yakshas* and *yakshis* and other divinities.

Sculptures (PLATE IX A)

1. Mahavira

Proceeding from left to right, the first sculpture is of Vardhamana Mahavira shown seated on the *simhaasana* in the *ardhaparyankasana* posture. The *simhaasana* is a rectangular seat decorated with *simhas* at the base and has decorated arm-rest on either side. A semi-circular decorated aureole that reaches upto the shoulder level of the Tirthankara is formed at the back and above this is the characteristic *chhatravali* or *mukkudai*. The Tirthankara is flanked on either side by *Chamaradharis* carrying *chamaras* in their left and right arms.

2. Parsvanatha

The panel next to the above represents the theme of *Upasārga* in which Parsvanatha is shown meditating in *Kayotsārga* posture protected by his attendant *Yaksha Dharanēndra*, the king of the *Nāgakumara* world. With five hoods, *Dharanendra* is represented in a zigzag fashion at the back of the Tirthankara with its tail shown carved on the latter's left side. On the left of the Tirthankara at a lower level is *Padmavati yakshi* with a single hood snake canopy. She is shown standing with her left hand placed on her hip and with the right she holds the shaft of the umbrella that rises above the hoods of *Dharanēndra*. On the right corner of the panel, at a higher level is a flying figure of *Kamaṭha* carrying a boulder to hurl at the Tirthankara. In the Jaina pantheon *Kamaṭha* represents the evil force out to disturb the penance of Parsvanatha. Realising the supremacy of the Tirthankara he repents for his actions and as such is shown in this sculpture as kneeling and offering his salutations. A little above this image and between the flying figure of *Kamaṭha*, is a person shown riding on an animal and holding some object in the right hand which he aims at the target.

3. Bahubali

The third and last of this panel is the relief of Bahubali wherein he is shown in a youthful and serene appearance. He stands in *Kayotsarga* posture while the creepers entwine his arms and thighs that show that he was so engrossed in meditation that he was unaware of external actions on his body. His two sisters, *Brahmi* and *Sundari* flank Bahubali on either side³⁵. Their bi-partisan hairdo and royal finery such as heavy *kundalas* and anklets are of typical Ganga style³⁶. On the left top corner of Bahubali is Indra mounted on his *Iravatha*. He is said to have descended to witness the severe penance that Bahubali was indulging in. On the above right corner of the panel are two miniature images. One of them is a female figure carrying a *pātra* over her head and who seems to be surprised at the severe penance that Bahubali was undertaking. Near her is the male figure, probably her consort, who having already offered his salutations moves away from the scene as is shown by his turned back body.

The details regarding the above sculptures are recorded in the inscriptions engraved within the natural cavern. An umbrella, the auspicious symbol of the Jaina is carved on top of the inscription. The record dated in Saka 815 corresponding to AD 892-893³⁷ of the Western Ganga King Rajamalla II (AD 877-AD907)³⁸, is partly in prose and partly in verse. The first part of the inscription exhort the high virtues of the illustrious pontiffs of the *Arunkālānvaya* who was well versed in all sciences of knowledge and these are described by the verse *nessesha-sastra-varasi-paragaih*. The *Arunkālānvaya* is described here as belonging to the *Jinēndra Saṅgha* of the *Nandi Saṅgha*. The second part of the inscription states that Rajamalla established abodes for Jinaraja at Vijayadri. The temple referred to in the inscription is the natural cavern that was designed into a temple with the introduction of the images of Tīrthaṅkaras and other Jaina

divinities. Vijayadri appears to be the ancient name of the hillock under study. The *Arunkalanvaya* figures in many of the inscriptions of Karnataka and was a reputed monastic organisation in that region during the 9th century AD³⁹.

The second inscription that is undated is engraved on the rock at the foot of the hill from where the flight of steps lead to the natural cavern containing the Jaina sculptural art. The inscription begins with the auspicious word *Śvasti*, the inscription is in grantha and Tamil scripts and Sanskrit and Tamil languages⁴⁰. This too is partly in prose and partly in verse. It offers salutations to the learned monastic organization of *Arunkālānvaya*, which was adorned by illustrious monks well-versed in all sciences. The inscription states that Vajranandi yogindrar, the disciple of Gunaviradever, the Mandalacharya of *Arunkālānvaya*, was instrumental in constructing a flight of steps, that leads to the natural cavern, the remnants of which are seen even to the present day. Vajranandi Yogindrar was an expert in religious doctrines and could have participated in religious debates for here he is described as a lion to the elephant-like disputants representing various faiths.

It is one of the earliest of the Jain epigraphs from the Tamil land where Jain monk and his disciple from Karnataka are mentioned along with their *sāṅgha* and *ānvaya*⁴¹. This monastic organization spread its religious activities outside its homeland by adjusting itself according to the religious practices of the region concerned, as is seen at Siyyamangalam where it transformed the natural resorts into shrines for the propagation of its faith. All these indicate that Jaina monks and organizations from Karnataka played a decisive role in the spread of Jainism gaining a powerful position in the Tondaimandalam region.

Even before the sculptures and inscriptions were carved at *Vijayadri*, the natural cavern could have been a home to the Jaina monks. This went a long way in meriting their attention as a center for excellence receiving royal support and

patronage by the Western Ganga ruler. This was probably one of the reasons as to why in the aftermath of the *bhakti* movement the Jains were keen on protecting their religious interests by introducing *darśana-bimbas*.

The popularity of Jainism in the place and its surrounding areas could have been one of the primary reasons for the choice of Siyyamangalam as an ideal place by Mahendravarman I to excavate the rock-cut temple dedicated to Lord Siva (**PLATE IX B**).

Thus, the vestiges of Jainism found here indicate that for the propagation of Jainism in the northern part of Tondaimandalam, the Jains from Karnataka were to be given credit. This together with the political atmosphere in the region contributed in large measure to the influx of beliefs and doctrines of Jainism into the Tamil region. The area in and around Siyyamangalam was an important centre for Jainism since the 6th-7th centuries AD and continued to exercise wide support from the laity and the royal houses thus fashioning the religious history of the region in general and of Jainism in particular.

ARMAMALAI

The village gets its name, Armamalai, after the huge hillock lying on the western periphery of the valley formed by the river Palar between Vaniyambadi and Ambur in the Vellore district. The hillock is located 4 km west of Malayambattu village. Though the environs of the valley is fertile, Armamalai is a dry mountainous zone covered with large rock outcrops and sparse vegetation of wild shrubs. Half way up on the sloping southern face of Armamalai is a huge natural cavern measuring 133 feet in length, 9 feet in height and has a depth (interior) of 35 feet. Within this are the Jaina relics of the 8th-9th centuries AD comprising of structural remains, paintings and sculptures⁴².

The cave interior

The cavern has been divided into two parts, one on the west and another on the east. The western part of the cavern carries structural remains and paintings on its ceiling whereas these are absent on the eastern part of the cavern. The mud brick wall which has been built using sun dried bricks rise from the floor of the cavern to the ceiling. The bricks have an average measurement of 13 cms in length, 10 cms in breadth and 4 cms in thickness. These structures probably are remnants of a mud- brick shrine.

The entrance to the shrine was through the narrow rectangular cell to the right of which there are three cells placed adjacent to one another and each having its entrance on the southern side. The central cell is smaller and measures 8 feet 11 inches in length and 5 feet and 5 inches in breadth. The two cells on either side measures 9 feet 3 inches in length and 7 feet 7 inches in breadth and 9 feet 4 inches in length and 7 feet 8 inches in breadth, respectively. At the western end of the cavern there is a comparatively large cell.

In the first cell of the cavern broken pieces of the granite slabs carrying the figures of the *dvārapala* and the lotus pedestal are placed.

Inscription

An inscription in archaic *vattelluttu* script is engraved on all the four sides of the broken lotus pedestal. Running in single line, it reads, *Sri Kanaka Bhatarar*, the disciple of *Nandi Bhatarar*⁴³. It is probably this monk who was instrumental in designing the whole cavern and initiating shrine worship herein.

The Sculptures

The *dvārapala* is shown standing with his left leg slightly raised, the right arm in *abhaya*, and the left holding the shaft of the *gadha*. The *dvārapala* is adorned with a *yagnopavita*, *kundalas*, armlets, bangles, and *kativastra* and unique hairdo where the hair is combed backward, folded and made into a tuft at the centre.

On another slab the *gadha* is shown, which in its design varies from the earlier one in that it has a double bar handle probably for tightening the grip over the weapon.

Of the other vestiges found within the shrine chamber, is a square stone slab on which is carved an eight petalled lotus.

The Trikuta-Shrine

The architectural remains on the western interior of the cavern suggest that it was converted into a *trikuta* shrine and the *dvarapalas* were placed on either side of its entrance. The principal Tirthankara was probably enshrined within the central shrine while the side shrines would have been intended for housing the sculptures of the *Yakshas* or the *Yakshis*⁴⁴. Due to the lack of concrete evidence either in the form of sculptures or epigraph, it is difficult to assign these shrines to any particular Tirthankara or attendant deity.

The temple was designed on the basis of a Hindu shrine, where the lotus pedestal base probably formed the base of a *manāsthambha* which could have once stood at the entrance to the *trikūta* shrine. The modification of the cavern on the lines of a temple could have been the result of Brahmanical influence.

Paintings

The ceiling on the extreme west of the cavern and walls carry traces of painting depicting Jaina themes. Except for a few, almost all these paintings have now been totally obliterated both due to centuries of neglect and the vagaries of nature. From the traces of painting it is noticed that ochre, green and black were extensively used and the majority of objects represented were animals, birds, lotus flowers and geometrical designs such as small circles which are painted in green. The extreme west of the ceiling carries the largest painted panel measuring 7x7 ½ feet depicting floral designs in circular motifs and four large circles⁴⁵ and at present two thirds of these paintings have been completely lost. Nearby is another panel depicting a pond with blossom lotus flowers and buds. The colour scheme used here is ochre for the flowers while the leaves are painted in dark green.

There are other panels depicting human figures astride on an animal and birds encircled in foliage⁴⁶. These panels are separated by thin black border line. In the panel showing riders, a couple is shown riding on the steed where there is a clear movement shown in the forward bent postures of the riders and the galloping movement of the animal⁴⁷. Except for the figure of the riders and upper part of the face of the animal, much of the painting has been completely lost. There is a tuft between the horns of the animal and these along with its ears are encircled within a band. The male rider holds on to the belt of the animal with his right arm whereas the left is raised up, indicating his eagerness and speed with which he was approaching his destination. The female riding along with him is comparatively a short figure and she places her right arm on her lap and the left is raised up. The raised upper left arms are reminiscent of the flying devas in the panel at Mahabalipuram⁴⁸. The ochre paint outlines the bodies of the two, whereas the upper garments of both these figures are painted green. Both the figures sport

conical crown and have a circular facial structure. Due to the obliterated state of the painting, it has been difficult to identify the animal. However it has been interpreted as mythical *Sārdula*⁴⁹.

The panel towards the left of the above is a bull painted with red ochre lines. Except for the face, the whole body of the animal is clearly visible such as the rump, the legs and the hooves. A broad strap passes atop the rump and beneath the tail covering the body of the bull. The multiple lines on the tail and rump suggest that the panel would have been re-outlined for the purpose of better proportionality⁵⁰.

Below the bull panel are seen traces of ducks encircled within the entwining foliage of the leaves that are painted in dark green. The birds have been outlined in ochre and black, with natural white of the underlying plaster unpainted to convey the whiteness of the feathers⁵¹, and one of them is shown preening its wings with the long pointed beak.

These painting on the ceiling of the cavern represents the Jaina holy theme of *Samavasarana* as was conceived by the artist when he drew the lotus ponds, the flying devas, the animals and the birds.

The remaining traces of paintings are seen on the extreme west wall of the shrine. Centuries of weathering, coupled with neglect have left a deep scar on these paintings that are showing traces of wearing out and needs urgent care for their restoration and preservation.

Technique of painting on the mud wall

In painting the mud brick walls of the cavern the artists used the tempera technique⁵² in which first a foundation was prepared by applying a layer of grey clay mortar, over which was laid a layer of heavy red clay and it was later

overlain by a third layer using fine red plaster base. The final stage was arrived at before painting by application of white lime plaster over the third layer.

The geographical proximity of Armamalai to regions of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh facilitated close cultural relations resulting in influx of ideas and beliefs. Its position as a hinterland resulted in it being under the political authority of various dynasties such as the Pallavas, the Gangas and the Rashtrakutas⁵³. The Gangas and the Rashtrakutas were great patrons of the Jaina religion and this was one of the important reasons for Jainism gaining a strong foothold in the region. Armamalai with its natural cavern and serene location, with a then predominantly rural set up provided an ideal location for the Jains to practice their religion.

The lack of concrete evidence such as a dated inscription has rendered the exact dating of these vestiges difficult. On the basis of the stylistic features of the dwarapalas and the paintings, the vestiges could be placed within the time frame of the 8th-9th Centuries AD. The Armamalai paintings have similarities with the paintings found from other parts of the southern peninsula all dated within the time gap of 7th-9th centuries AD. The political history of the time over the region was dominated by the Western Gangas and in the light of the above evidences it would be apt to assign Armamalai vestiges to the period of the former who had political interests with the Pallavas since the inception of their dynasty.

TIRUNATHARKUNRU (*PLATE X*)

Tirunatharkunru otherwise known as Sirukadambur, is located 3 km north of Gingee and is easily approachable by motorable road. On the northern periphery of the sparsely populated village is hillock after which the village gets its name. It stands approximately 150 meter high above ground level and carries large rock boulders that form into natural shelters. Stone cut steps, which are at

present lying in a dilapidated state, lead one to the top of the hillock which was once home to the Jaina ascetics as early as the 5th-6th centuries AD and still later during the 9th-10th centuries AD as recorded by the inscriptions and the sculptural art executed on granite boulders.

The earliest of the inscriptions recorded from the site is a Tamil-Brahmi inscription⁵⁴. This inscription which record the observance of *sallekhana* by a Jain ascetic is very brief and does not bear any date or year⁵⁵ but on the basis of paleography it has been dated to the 5th-6th centuries AD⁵⁶. In this record, the ascetic who is said to have performed *sallekhanā*, is one Chandranandi who, without food and water, fasted for a period of fifty-seven days and attained *moksha*. It has already been studied in the second chapter. But this site continued to be a significant place for the Jains even during the 8th-9th centuries AD. This is inferred from the art and sculptural work found therein.

At the foothill, a relief of a Tīrthaṅkara is carved on a stone slab. This serene and contemplative image is shown standing in the *kāyōtsarga* posture. At the back of his head is a *prabhāvali* and these are topped by a *mukkuḍai*. On the basis of the style of execution, the sculpture has been dated to the 9th century AD⁵⁷.

At the top of the hillock overlooking the cultivated land, is a sculpture of a seated Tīrthaṅkara facing the eastern direction. With the passage of time the slab carrying the image has been broken because of which only the right side of the Tīrthaṅkara is at present visible. The Tīrthaṅkara is shown seated on a three tiered pedestal with *sim̐has* carved within the vertical bars. Herein he is shown seated in the *ardhapadmāsana* posture with arms placed one over the other and resting on the crossed legs. Because of weathering, the details of the face is not clearly known except that he has elongated earlobes and the hair forming into curls overhead. At the back of his head a prominent *prabhāvali* overhead with the

flames, is well carved. This whole composition is topped by a *trichchatravalli*. The execution of the sculpture and the decorative elements of the niche point to the sculptural style of the 9th century AD⁵⁸.

On the north - eastern direction of the above sculpture is a huge boulder rising to a height of approximately 100 feet above ground level. On the northern side of this, facing the southern direction is a marvelous specimen of Jaina sculptural art that remains unparalleled for its uniqueness in Tondaimandalam and probably in the whole of the southern region. The twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras have been carved within a niche in two rows of twelve each. Each of these Tīrthaṅkaras is uniformly carved with clean shaven head, highly contemplative facial expression with eyes closed, elongated earlobes, sturdy body and are shown seated on simple pedestal in the characteristic *ardha-padmāsana* posture. At the back of the head of the Tīrthaṅkaras the *prabhāvali* has been prominently shown and these are topped by a *mukkudai*.

Separating each Tīrthaṅkaras are *chamaras* or flywhisks that have been placed cross wise. These are the representations of the *Caturvimsati-pattas* of the Tirthankaras and were sculptured to function as *darsana bimbās* for the Jaina monks and for the lay followers as well. In this context the other two sculptures, the one found at the foot hill and another at the top of the hillock are to be identified respectively with Rshabhanatha and Mahavira, the first and the last of the Tīrthaṅkaras. They altogether represent the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras of the Jaina pantheon. These relief images have been dated to the 9th century AD thus being co-eval with the other two sculptures that have been described above⁵⁹.

Apart from the earlier Tamil-Brahmi inscription mentioned above, there is another inscription engraved in Tamil script and language that is recorded from the same place. Similar in content this too is memorial in nature and records the

nisidikai of a Jaina ascetic. The inscription states that a monk Ilayapadarar fasted for a period of thirty days and attained moksha. This inscription is paleographically dated to the 10th century AD⁶⁰.

Taking into consideration the above two inscriptions, both commemorating the death of ascetics by the method of *sallekhanā*, it could be concluded that these Jaina ascetics stayed and practiced austerities in the ideal atmosphere at the hillock. In the later days with the influx of iconographical style from the Karnataka and other regions, the hitherto simple resorts of the ascetics came to possess sculptural representation of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras. These were utilized by the Jains both for the purpose of contemplation and propagation of their philosophies and ideals. Without royal endowments, these ancient Jain centres developed their own styles through the medium of which they succeeded in maintaining their religious base in the society and sustaining their indigenous customs and beliefs.

PANCHAPANDAVARMALAI

Panchapandavarmalai, a tiny hamlet, also known as Tiruppanamalai or Baba Adam Pahad lies six kilometers south of Arcot on the Arcot-Kannamangalam road. Its features that include a continuous hillock of approximately 300 meters high above surface with a natural cavern and water source has made it as an ideal spot for inhabitation of the Jaina monks in the early medieval period. The source of the word *Panchapāṇḍavarmalai* is with reference to the stone beds found within the natural cavern, which are locally referred to as *Panchapāṇḍavar padukkai* or the bed of the five Pandavas.

On the floor of the natural cavern stone beds with an average measurement of 180 cm in length and 77.5 cm in width have been chiseled. Three

of these are chiseled in north-south orientation on the slopping rock surface within the cavern and one on the southern exterior surface of the cavern.

An inscription dated in the 50th year, i.e 781 AD of the reign of the Pallava Nandivarman II is engraved in Tamil script and language on the North-Eastern cliff of the cavern ⁶¹. It records that in the presence of the Jaina teacher *Nāganandin*, an image of *Ponniyakkiyār* was carved by one *Nāranan*, the son of a *Maruttuvar* from the village of Pugalalaimangalam. This is the earliest available dated *yakshi* sculpture found in the Tondaimandalam (**PLATE XI A**).

The relief sculpture, a fine specimen of Pallava art, mentioned in the record is carved on a rock face at the entrance to the cave interior. Encircled within a shallow niche, *yakshi Ponniyakkiyār* dominates the whole panel. She is shown seated under a tree in the *Uṭkutika* posture, with the left leg placed vertically on the seat and the right leg touching the floor. Seated in a relaxed posture, the *yakshi* supports herself by placing her right hand on the pedestal and in the left she holds a lotus bud. She is adorned with the royal paraphernalia such as the *Karanta makuta*, *Patrakuṇḍalas*, *haras*, bangles and *Udarabhanda*.

On the right side of the *Yakshi*, a comparatively small male figure is shown standing adorned with a *makuta*, *kundalas*, *haras* and a lower garment. His right hand is held closer to the chest and the left is raised up conveying his astonishment and praise for the *yakshi*.

At the base of the pedestal three miniature figures have been carved. Of these, the bigger one is of a female attendant who carries a *pātra* (pot) in her raised right hand. Of the other two miniature figures, the one in the centre is shown mounted on an animal while the second one stands with arms flung open.

The identification of the panel has been a subject of diverse interpretations. Scholars who have mentioned the site have identified the *yakshi* with *Siddhāyika*⁶², with *Jvālāmālīnī*⁶³, and with *Hema Yakshi*⁶⁴. Equally ambiguous was the identification of the male figure to the right of the *yakshi* with the Jaina teacher Naganandin⁶⁵.

In the background of these observations it is necessary to have a brief account about the life and origin of *yakshi* Ambika. The legend about the origin of Ambika, the *yakshi* of the 22nd Tirthankara Neminatha, is found in the Digambara *Yakshi katha* of the palm leaf manuscript *Punyaśrava Katha*⁶⁶. According to the legend Ambika as Agnila was the wife of Somaśarman and had two sons Subhankara and Prabhankara. Due to domestic quarrels she is forced to leave the household with her children and her lady attendant. Her husband repenting for his action wants his family back but mistaking his intention, they jump to the well. Agnila was reborn as Ambika, the *yakshi* of Neminatha⁶⁷.

The iconography of Ambika is sculptured on the basis of the above legend. She is generally shown seated under a tree accompanied by her children, the lady attendant and her Simha *vāhana*⁶⁸. The last mentioned was Somasarman, who in his rebirth was born to serve the *yakshi*.

The Panchapandavarmalai panel conforms to the legends and iconographic style of the *yakshi*. Thus, on the basis of these details the sculpture of *Ponniyakkiyār* at Panchapandavarmalai is to be identified with *yakshi* Ambika sculptured there along with her children and the lady attendant.

The identification of the male figure with Naganandin of the inscription cannot be accepted because the Jaina monks are never clad in royal finery. Second, on the basis of the legend of Ambika, the standing male figure is to be

identified as Somasarman. The inscription particularly mentions the word *irrukka* which means 'in the presence of'⁶⁹, hence it is to be taken to mean that the image was sculptured in the presence of Naganandin, who probably was the preceptor of the cult of Ambika. The *Marutuvār* mentioned in the inscription actually stands for the Tamil word 'medical practitioner'.

The cultic significance of the image here is evident from the independent position held by Ambika because here she is not accompanying the Tithankara. This could suggest the development of the cult of mother goddess among Jains during the Pallava period especially after the *bhakti* movement so as to offer to the devout a Jaina counterpart for the brahmanical goddess Durga or Parvati.

This place continued to play a significant role in the religious history of Jains even under the changed political scenario when this region within Perumthirī nadu of Paduvūr Kōttam passed into the hands of the mighty Cholas. An inscription supporting the above statement is engraved on the south-eastern cave wall and is dated in the 8th regnal year, i.e. 993 AD, of the Chola King Rajaraja I⁷⁰. It records the gift of income derived as taxes from the Pallichchandam village of Kuranganpadi (modern Kurumbadi) to the god of Tiruppanmalai by Vira Chola, the Lata ruler and the feudatory of the Cholas⁷¹. *Tirupānnmalai dēvar* of the inscription refer to the seated image of the Tīrthaṅkara that is carved on the façade of the natural cavern. The image is shown meditating in *ardha-padmāsana* posture with a triple umbrella overhead and flywhisk on either side of the shoulders. Tiruppanmalai's literal translation is "the holy milky mountain"⁷² a poetical connotation for the 'the snow clad mountain' or Mount Kailash, the abode of the first Tīrthaṅkara Rshabanatha. On the basis of the etymology, the god of Tiruppanmalai is to be identified with Rshabanatha⁷³.

At the lower level of the inscription, in two separate shallow niches, the image of a monk and an animal, probably of a jackal, are carved. The carving of an animal in a separate niche is the earliest and only known instance of its kind so far recorded in the Tamil region. It can be taken to represent the theme of *Nariviruttam*, a 9th-10th centuries AD Jain work composed by Tirutakkadevar, in which the jackal symbolises the impermanence of human existence and futility of materialism.

Tiruppanmalai developed into a monastery during the 9th-10th centuries AD, where reputed Jaina teachers imparted education to both male and female students who in turn worked for the welfare of adherents of Jain faith. Pattinikkuratti Adigal, one such female disciple of Aristhanemi Pidarar, made a gift of a well for the convenience of inhabitants of the *penpalli* (women's monastery) at Villapakkam, during the 10th Century A.D ⁷⁴. The proliferation of these monastic centers resulted in the emergence of monks and students as powerful ecclesiastical group.

As a composite whole, the natural cavern with its Jaina vestiges developed as an important center for Jaina religion from 8th century AD of the Pallavas and continued to exercise profound influence on the religious beliefs of the people spanning centuries continuing into the Chola period.

Rock-cut unfinished temple (PLATE XI B)

On the north-eastern foothill of the same hillock stands an unfinished rock-cut temple. A modern flight of steps lead to the floor of the rock-cut temple standing at height of 150 cm above ground level. A row of six pillars and pilasters on either extreme, with cut corbels devoid of any ornamentation form the façade of the temple. Behind the façade, is the second row of pillars with pilasters on

either end, which divide the oblong hall into a *mukha-mandapa* and an *ardha-mandapa*. At the back of these, is a row of seven unfinished cells. Two huge niches on either side of the cavern were probably intended for sculpturing the *dwarapalakas*. The ceiling carries traces of painting. In front of one of the niches, a group of small depressions are seen which probably was intended for carrying the painting materials. This unfinished rock-cut temple exhibit Mahendravarman I style of architecture ⁷⁵.

On the face of the rock cliff, above the façade of the rock-cut temple is the natural drip line. Above the drip line is carved within a shallow niche, a Tirthankara seated in *ardha-padmasana*. On stylistic grounds this sculpture appears to be contemporary with the Tirthankara found above the natural cavern. In all probability the Jains utilised the cave temples at a later date for the purpose of imparting education and allied activities.

Panchapandavarmalai, since the days of the Pallavas continued to play a significant role in the social life of the people, the remainders of which continue to the present.

NARAYANAPURAM

Located 15 km south of Walajapet in the Vellore district, Naryanapuram is a little village with a hillock approximately 150 feet high above ground level and on the eastern face of the hillock is a natural cavern. As is case with many of the Jain centres, this hillock too has been named as *Panchapandavarmalai* by the villagers after the stone beds that has been found within the natural cavern.

The group of seven stone bed has been carved adjacent to each other and each has an average measurement of 168 cm in length and 82 cm in breadth. These

stone beds have been chiseled smooth and except one, all the other stone beds have pillow lofts. These stone beds have been dated to the 7th-8th centuries AD⁷⁶.

During the 7th and 8th century AD with the Bhakti movement gaining momentum, Jainism incorporated Brahmanical principles such as image worship and rituals. As a result of which these natural shelters of Jaina monks began to be designed on the lines of Brahmanical monasteries by the construction of *mandapas* and introduction of *darśana bimbās* of the Tīrthaṅkaras. At Narayanapuram such structural work is seen at the entrance to the cavern where traces of *mandapa* walls are seen. A broken sculpture of the Rshabhanatha that has been dated to the 10th century AD⁷⁷ is found at the entrance to the cavern. In its glorious time, this could have graced the cave interior but with the passage of time and abandonment of these centres the sculpture lies abandoned.

The dating of the sculpture reveals that the natural cavern was occupied by the monks who utilized them for the purpose of practicing their religious doctrines and had occupied the place continuously for a period spanning three centuries.

KILSATTAMANGALAM

Kilsattamangalam, located 6 Km west of Vandavasi formed a part of early medieval territorial jurisdiction of Venkunrakottam since the time of the Pallavas. Inhabited by the jains since early 7th-8th centuries AD, it even to the present day houses a number of Jain families who adhere to their distinct Jain identity. In the centre of the village is an ancient but renovated Jaina temple and numerous inscriptions that are inscribed on a natural rock surface.

The Chandraprabha temple (*PLATE XII*) the centre of Jaina religious activities, is built on an elevated place in the north-western part of the village. An ancient shrine, the temple has undergone structural additions and renovations at

intervals of time and as such the temple at present appear to have a modern appearance. Built facing the east and of moderate proportion, the temple comprises of a *Garbhagriha*, an *Ardhamandapa*, a *Mukhamandapa*, and is fronted by a *Mānasthamba* and all these components are enclosed within a *Prākara* wall which has a *Gopura* entrance on the Northern direction.

The *Garbhagriha* is square in plan, topped by a miniature *Vimana* superstructure with a metal *stūpi*. It enshrines Chandraprabha, the 8th Jaina Tirthankara. Carved out of soapstone and of moderately large size the Tirthankara is shown seated in the *ardhaparyankāsana* posture.

As is the practice with the Digambara Jain temples of Tamil Nadu, *pūja* or *abhishēkas* are not performed for this image and for these purposes, a granite image of Chandraprabha is placed in front of the main deity in the *Ardhamandapa*. The *Ardhamandapa* is a plain rectangular structure fronted by an adjoining *Mukhamandapa*, which is square in plan. The *Mukhamandapa* is supported by two rows of five pillars each and on the façade there is a horizontal row of four pillars. These pillars are square at the base, rectangular in the middle and again topped by a square shaft with the corbels. They carry brahmanical themes on their square shafts such as those of Vishnu, Lakshmi, Siva and Parvati mounted on the Nandi Vahana, Hanuman, devotees offering worship to the Linga and Kaliyanarthana of Krishna. These pillars were taken from the ruined Siva temple⁷⁸ indicating that the *Mukhamandapa* is a recent addition to the main temple.

A number of bronze images of Jaina divinities such as Chandraprabha, Pushpadanta, Munisuvata, Yakshi and Yakshi are found within the temple and they are all dateable within the time span of last hundred years⁷⁹. The *Mānasthamba* stands on a three-tiered flag-shaft that is erected in front of the temple complex.

The temple is the core centre for religious and social activities of the Jains of the village. Among the festivals celebrated in the temple is Aksha Tithi that fall in the month of Chaitra. According to the jains, on this particular day Lord Rshabhanatha returns after a span of twelve years and was first offered sugarcane juice to break his fast, hence remembering the auspicious occasion the festival is celebrated. The eight-day festival of Nandisvaram is held in the three months of Karthigai, Masi and Adi each. Apart from this much significance is attached to the day of Mahavira Jayanthi (all the above details regarding the *pujas* and festivals are the result of personal communication with Jain priests of Kilsattamangalam temple).

At a distance of about 300 feet south of the temple is a large rock outcrop, which the inhabitants here refer to as Perumal Parai. On its face are engraved numerous inscriptions dating from the 8th century AD to the 10th century AD recording a whole gamut of events that are related to the ancient Jain temple and donations that were made to the shrine.

The earliest inscription found here belongs to the 14th year of the reign of Pallava Nandivarman II⁸⁰. It states that a gift of seven Kalanju, a coin varying in weight between 45 and 50 grains⁸¹, of gold was made by Ilaiyar Appanandi probably a Jain philanthropist for feeding the Jain monks who were not in regular services of the temple. The village assembly (*ūrār*) with whom the gift was entrusted agreed to protect the charity and feed the monks regularly with one *uḷakku* of rice per day. The donor of the charity ensured the proper maintenance and execution of the gift granted by issuing moral threats stating that who so ever fails in their duty in carrying out the charity will incur the sin of having destroyed the *Kamakōttam*. The inscription also makes it clear that the gold will not become the property of the goldsmith.

The next inscription is dated to the 56th regnal i.e., 778 AD of Nandivarman II the Pallava ruler⁸². The record states that *Pundamuppa*, the daughter of *Chinnaraiyar* from *Vilukkam* made a donation of seventeen *kalañju* of gold, which was to be used to supply of one *ulakku* of rice for feeding somebody whose name is damaged in the record. It is further stated that along with this fresh charity, the villagers would protect the earlier gift and amount deposited by *Ilaiyar Appanandi*.

The most notable of these inscriptions is the one dated in the 6th regnal year i.e. 876 AD of Pallava Kampavarman⁸³. It states that *Madevi*, the wife of *Katakadiyaraiyar* was instrumental in renovating the then existing temple (known from the inscription as *Srikōil*). She made structural additions to the shrine such as a *Mukhamandapa* and along with this was also instrumental in building the holy shrine or *Tirukōil* for *Yakka Padāri* or *Yakshi Bhatari*. And to this renovated and enlarged Jaina temple *Madevi* made a gift of a *Perumani* or gong.

The Chandranatha temple had been renovated at regular intervals as is seen by the inscriptions and architectural variations of various periods. On the basis of the earliest inscription of AD 745 it is inferred that the original structure was a miniature shrine cum monastery which functioned as a congregation hall for Jaina monks. This was visited by monks from distant places and for feeding them gold was entrusted in the hands of the village assembly. To this shrine, adherents of the jain faith made gifts. *Pundamuppa* the lady devotee from *Villukkam* gave seventeen *kalanju* of gold to the temple. This institute was held in high reverence as equivalent to that of a *Kāmakōttam* and anyone not complying with the task of maintaining the charity care was to incur the sin of having destroyed the same. This is the earliest occurrence of the term *Kāmakōttam* in the Pallava inscription⁸⁴. *Kāmakōttam* is the nomenclature attached to the religious institutions, which cater to the needs of imparting religious doctrines and which also took upon themselves

the task of safeguarding the religious interests of the particular faith for example the famous Kanchi Kamakottam. That it is existing even to the present day at Kanchipuram and wields considerable awe and reverence symbolises the sacred position held by these institutions in the religious physic of the people. On similar lines the temple cum monastery at Kilsattamangalam thus would have functioned as the religious head for the Jains. The inscriptions here provide the earliest reference to the construction of a separate shrine within a structural temple for the Yakshi⁸⁵. This would indicate the slow evolution of Yakshi as a separate entity enjoying independent status within the larger unit of a Jain temple and receiving gifts of land for lighting the lamp. The entire temple complex was known as Vimala Sri Aryathirthapalli during the 10th century AD⁸⁶ to which donations were made by Chola ruler Madurai Konda Koparakesari Parantaka I.

Kilsattamagalam Jaina vestiges provide the earliest evidence to the evolution of religious institutions and forms of worship that characterised the emergence of Jaina religion on par with the brahmanical sects. The increasing resources of the temple enabled them to emerge as large temple complex with the establishment of shrines for subsidiary deities bringing along with it new rituals and iconic representation. The process of the temple playing a significant role in the beliefs and life of the adherents of the Jaina faith that started during the time of the Pallavas in the 8th century AD continues unchallenged, in spite of the religious adversities that characterised certain periods of South Indian history, even to the present day.

OLAKKUR

Olakkur is located at 20 km north east of Tindivanam in the Villuppuram district. In the village proper, a stone slab carrying a Jaina inscription and image has been found⁸⁷ but this is at present untraced. Being exposed to the vagaries of nature, the slab is reported to be much worn out⁸⁸.

The inscription states that the image of *Prithvi vidanga kuratti* is caused to have been made by a king⁸⁹. Above the written document on the stone slab, a sculpture of a female has been carved, wherein she is shown with a single *mukkudai* above her head and is seated on a pedestal flanked on either side by lamp stands. The *Pridivi Vidānga Kuṛatti* of the inscription is to be identified with this image.

The epithet of *Kuṛatti* is the honorific title in Jainism given to the lady teacher⁹⁰. The single *mukkudai* featured on the sculpture is intended to represent reputed monks and nuns. A similar representation of a monk with a single *mukkudai*, overhead, is found at the 7th century Jaina centre of Panchapandavarmalai in the Vellore district. Considering the occurrence of the designation of *Kuṛatti* in the inscription and the representation of the single umbrella, the image is taken to be of the reputed Jaina nun *Pridvi Vidānga*. As recorded in the inscription, the image would have been caused to be made under the instruction of a devout Jain chieftain who ruled over the region. Due to the absence of the name of the king, he cannot be identified with precision.

This site is located within the periphery of numerous Jaina centres, each of which has been noted for the numerous Jaina vestiges that date from the 5th to the modern centuries of the Christian era. On the basis of the internal evidences provided by the inscription, it is to be stated that there would have been a large monastery at the place similar to the Jaina institutions that have been recorded from the ancient Jaina centres of Vedal and later at Villapakkam. These centres have provided the earliest evidence for the Jain contribution to the cause of women's education. For the selfless services rendered by *Pridivi Vidānga Kuṛatti* to the cause of education and to the propagation of Jaina principles, this nun of high repute was immortalised by the devout by erecting a sculpture.

The image of *Pridvi Vidanga Kuratti* is thus, the first known available evidence to suggest that nuns of the jaina order enjoyed equal status meriting the erection of images for them. This would in a long way add merit to the fact that even as early as the 6th-7th centuries AD, Jainism thought and acted far ahead of its times in the social emancipation of women and in their intellectual development.

^{RU} TIRUNANGONDAI

Tirun^{RU}angondai is located near Ulundurpettai in Villupuram district. The Jaina temples here are built atop a hillock. Atop the hillock is a natural cavern with stone beds.

The temple is mentioned as Jinagiri in the inscriptions recorded from the places, a majority of which belong to the Cholas. Its history and much of its development as a center for Jainism developed only during the Chola and post – Chola time. But its antiquity dates back to the 8th century AD.

This is inferred from the inscription recorded from Vedal. The record is dated in the 14th year of the reign of Nandivarman II. It states that Cinkan Cakktimalai made donations to t the Tirunarungondai *palli*⁹¹.

This would indicate the prominence of the Jaina center during the Pallava time.

VEDAL (PLATE XIII)

Vedal one of the prominent Jaina centres of the 8th-9th century AD, lies 27 km north-east of Gingee and is connected by buses plying from there. It falls within the radius of villages that has yielded Jaina vestiges of considerable antiquity, namely Negnurpatti, Agalur and Tondur. At present a thinly populated village, Vedal has yielded inscriptions and material evidences suggesting that the

place was a significant Jain center reputed for its excellence in learning from the time of the Pallavas. The place is referred to as Vidal in the inscriptions but subsequently became Vedal in the later times.

In the center of the village there is a huge natural cavern measuring 20 meters in length and 14 meters in width and is sheltered by a large mass of rocks that form the roof of the cavern. This natural cavern, according to the earliest inscription found here and dated in the 14th regnal year of Pallava Nandivarman II corresponding to 745 AD, functioned as a *palli* or monastery of the Jains⁹². The record states that the institution received *pallichchandam* or tax free land grants from the village public land and also from *Cinkan Caktimalli* in his individual capacity. The donor *Cinkan Caktimalli*, according to the same record, was instrumental in renovating the *palli* or monastery at Tirunarungondai, another significant Jain center of much antiquity. These evidence indicate that the monasteries at Vidal and Tirunarungondai were contemporary and received donations from the same person who was no doubt a Jaina philanthropist devoted to the cause of education. This is the earliest of the available Pallava record to mention land grants made by an individual in his independent capacity to a Jaina Palli⁹³.

A much damaged inscription from the same place record donation that were made for the erection of a *mandapa* for the *palli*⁹⁴. The *mandapa* even to the present day stands in a fairly good condition at the entrance to the cavern. It is formed by three rows of square pillars that support the ceiling carrying remnants of a brick superstructure. The *mandapa* would have been provided with architectural additions to enhance the social importance and sacredness of the *palli* in conformity with landscape of the surroundings. Apart from this the cavern is devoid of any sculptural or architectural remains.

The significant amount of donations and land grants made to the *Vidar palli* indicate that it was graced with reputed teachers well versed in all sciences and functioned as a large monastery. It would have catered to the educational needs of the time, attracting students from far and wide and played a decisive role in promoting education and in the propagation of Jaina doctrines with the untiring services of the nuns. This fact is corroborated by the Chola inscription that has been recorded from the place. The epigraph is dated in the 14th regnal year of Chola ruler Aditya I, corresponding to AD 885⁹⁵ AD. This epigraph for the first time mentions the name of the *palli* as *Mādevi Arāndi Mangalam* and states that the monastery catered to the educational needs of four hundred *mānākkīyār* or women students. These women students were under the leadership of *Kanakavīra kuratthiyār* and along with them there were five hundred *turavīyar* or nuns who were associated with the *palli*. *Kanakavīra Kuratiyar* is stated here to be the disciple of *Gunakirthi Bhatarrar*. *Gunakirthi Bhatarrar* can be identified with *Gunakirthi* of the *Mailapa-tirtha*, of the *Yāpanīya Saṅgha* and is referred to in the contemporary inscriptions of Karnataka, and being a monk of high reputation, students from far and wide would have enrolled themselves under him. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that the monks of the *Yāpanīya* order played a decisive role in according women the right to education and to enroll themselves as nuns too to attain liberation.

This inscription was earlier interpreted as recording a conflict that had ensued between the *manakkiyārs* led by *Kanakavīra Kurathiyar* and the *turaviyar*, and because of this the former were taken care of and fed by the villagers of Vidal⁹⁶. A re-reading of the inscription and the word *kolladha amayalāl* has revealed that, it was the constraint of space in the monastery that led the villagers of Vidal to agree to feed and protect the women students⁹⁷.

The donors exhibited their high reverence and social obligation for the safety of the economic and social rights of the Jain monastery. This was ensured by issuing moral threats at the end of the inscription, that who so ever disrespect or shies away from his or her above mentioned duties of taking care of the monastery will incur the sin equal to the offence committed on the banks of the sacred river Ganga and Kumari (Kanyakumari).

The inscription is significant for many factors: firstly, it defines the territorial jurisdiction of Vidal under *Singapuranādu*, a division of *Palkunrakōttam*- one of the twenty-four administrative units of the Pallavas⁹⁸. Secondly, as there is no mention in the inscriptions about the Jain monk, *Vidal palli* or *Mādevi Arandi Mangalam* as the name itself suggest is to be considered as a monastic establishment exclusively meant for the nuns and for women students.

This is one of the earliest instances in the Tamil region where Jaina monachism extended support to the cause of women's edcation and catered to the nuns of the Jaina order. Since the time of the Pallavas the Vidal *palli* was a reputed center of learning, leading to its patronage even in the succeeding time of the Cholas, warranting donations for its maintenance and care. Thirdly, the authors of the inscription on behalf of the donors issue moral threat that are similar to those of the Brahmanical grants. This would indicate the slow assimilation of the latter's customs mainly to maintain Jain identity and safeguard their interests in the midst of the growing Brahmanical popularity. Moreover, this was the period that saw the emergence of the powerful *mathas* of various sects of Saivism with their own set of rules and regulations. This made it necessary for the Jains to maintain hold over their set of followers by adopting practices that would give them a social hold.

The inscription from Vedal would suggest the institution received economic and social support by the villagers. Due to its ideal geographical location and backed by munificent donations, Vidal Palli served the ideal goal of imparting education and championing the cause of women's emancipation even as early the 8th century AD, unaffected by the strong wave of the Bhakti movement that had spread far and wide. Fulfilling the social need of education and particularly of women's emancipation was the first step towards winning mass support and receiving social recognition.

PERUMANDUR

An important Jaina locality, the village is located near Tindivanam, in Villuppuram district. This place is even to the present day a strong hold of Digambara Jains. There are two temples dedicated to Rsabhanatha and Chandraprabha in the village, both of which are center of activity for the Jains. The architecture and inscriptions recovered from the place would push the antiquity of these shrines to the 8th century AD.

The Rsabhanatha temple (*PLATE XIV A*) built on the similar lines of Brahmanical shrines. It has a *garbhagriha* (*PLATE XIV B*), a *mandapa*, *mukhamndapa* and gopura entrance. The *vimana* carry sculptures of the Jaina divinities. The sculpture of the main deity Rsabhanatha is built out of marble and similar to all the Jaina temples, the *abhishēka vighraha* is placed in front of the main image. Towards the North of the main shrine is as a sub-shrine for Dharmadevi. The mandapa ceiling traces of painting over which recently a new layer of painting has been done. They depict the Tīrthaṅkararas and Jaina divinities (*PLATE XIV C*).

The temple has been recently renovated, which has led to obliteration of all the earlier architectural features. The temple was earlier known as Iravikual Sundarapperumpalli. Inscriptions available from the place push the antiquity of the temple to the 9th century AD of the Pallava period. The inscription is dated to the 19th year of the reign of Nandivarman III⁹⁹. And records the grant of paddy to the temple to conduct *pujas*. Grants were made to the temple during the reign of Ganga-Pallava ruler Vijaya Nandi Vikramavarman. The Sambuvaraya chieftains too made gift of *pallichandam* land to these temples.

The place also produced scholars such as Mandalapurusha, the Tamil lexicographer¹⁰⁰. Thus it is seen that the Jains from the 9th century AD or before had established a strong social-cultural hold over Perumandur and thus influencing even its environs.

The Chandraprabha temple (*PLATE XIV D AND PLATE XIV E*), built near the Rsabhanatha shrine is comparatively smaller in size. The temple consists of a *Garbhagriha*, an *ardhamandapam*, and a *mandapa*. These are fronted by a *balipitha*. The other components of the temple include the *naivēdya* hall and a well. The Rsabhanatha temple too received donations notably from the Sambuvaraya chiefs.

The Jaina antiquity of Perumandur illustrate that they were able to contribute to the social and literary spheres. Even at the peak of the Saiva movement these centers had succeeded in creating a niche for themselves in the Tamil Society.

TYAGADURGAM

Tyagadurgam is a small village situated 18 km east of Kallakkurichchi on the Kallakkurichchi-Ulundurpettai road in the Viluppuram district. Within the

village there is a hillock approximately 200 feet high above ground level which the villagers refer to as the *Tyagadurga malai*. Half way up this hillock is a natural cavern that measures 10 feet in height and has in recent years been converted into a shrine, referred to by the village folks as the *Malaiamman* temple.

Sculptures within the cavern

Inside the cavern, the sculptures of the Jaina divinities such as Tirthankara and of the Yakshi have been found that suggests its occupation by the Jaina ascetics. These finely carved Jain reliefs on rock slabs are simple in artistic expression but exhibit the stylistic and standardized features of the 8th century AD¹⁰¹.

Tīrthaṅkara

The image of Tīrthaṅkara is carved in relief on a semi-triangular stone block. The three tiered pedestal is formed by cutting horizontal bars supported by three *Simhas*. The *Simhas* are carved at the base of the pedestal within the alternated vertical bars. On the pedestal, the Tīrthaṅkara is shown seated in *ardha-padmasana* with palms placed one over the other on the navel and resting on the crossed legs. The sculptor has taken great care in portraying the anatomical features of the Tīrthaṅkara such as the round face with eyes closed and in deep mediation, elongated earlobes, shaven head and broad shoulders. The fingers of the hand and feet have been portrayed realistically. Behind the head of the Tirthankara is a simple *prabhāvali* with the *jvālas* shown in conical shape. On either side of the *prabhāvali* is some indistinct objects below which are two simple *chāmarās*. The whole composition is topped by a *mukkudai* that has been carved utilizing the tip of the semi-circular stone slab.

The Yakshi Sculpture

The relief panel of *yakshi* is carved on a separate stone slab and is placed towards the right of the Tīrthaṅkara.

The panel depicts Yakshi Ambika, accompanied by her *parivaras*, standing in the *tribhanga* posture under a tree. The image is the characteristic of the 7th- 8th century art of the Pallavas as indicated by the slenderness of her body and round face with a smiling expression befitting her benevolent character. Ambika is adorned with a *Karanda makuta*, *patrakundalas*, *hāras*, *udarabhanda*, bangles and waist dress. While the raised right arm of the *yakshi* holds a bunch of lotus buds, her left arm is placed on her attendant's head in the gesture of offering him protection.

Normally Ambika *Yakshi* is shown accompanied by her female attendant¹⁰² but in the image that is found here, there is a deviation from the set rule. Herein she is shown accompanied by a male attendant. The sturdy male carries a *patra* in his raised left arm whereas his right arm hangs down. The *yakshi* offers her protection by placing her left arm on his head.

At the shoulder level of the *yakshi* are sculptured two young children in their royal paraphernalia with a stylized hairdo forming a tuft at the top, *haras*, bangles and flowing waist dress. Both the figures place their left arm in *katiyavalambitha* and in their right arm hold some indistinct object.

Towards the right of Ambika, her *Simha vahana* with well defined manes, bulging eyeballs, wide open jaw, has been naturalistically portrayed. The animal has been sculptured sideways with its back turned towards the *yakshi*.

The sculpture of the Tīrthaṅkara is to be identified as Neminatha in the light of identification of *yakshi* image with Ambika. In the Jain pantheon, she is

the *yakshi* or *sasanadevi* of the twenty-second Tirthankara Neminatha¹⁰³ and at Tyagadurgam where the Tirthankara is placed to the right of *yakshi*, the image is to be identified with Neminatha. In the light of this identification this would be the earliest known sculptural representation of Neminatha found in Tondaimandalam. These sculptures though on the basis of the stylistic execution are dated to the period of the Pallavas, in the absence of inscription they cannot be attributed to any one particular Pallava ruler¹⁰⁴.

With hillocks and natural cavern and close proximity to ancient Jain centres such as Tirunarungondai, Tyagadurgam provided a conducive atmosphere to the Jaina ascetics to inhabit their environs. Hence these sculptures that have been described above are the *darsana-bimbas* that essentially formed a part of the Jaina pantheon in the wake of the religious changes that characterized the society during the 7th-8th centuries AD.

Perhaps due to historical factors there have been no Jains in Tyagadurgam for the last two centuries. And in this scenario, the Jaina images that are found within the natural cavern have been incorporated into the mainstream Hindu pantheon. The image of the Tirthankara is worshipped as *Siddha* whereas the image of Yakshi Ambika is revered as *Malaïamman* after which the temple gets its name¹⁰⁵.

KIRAIPAKKAM

This ancient headquarters of Jaina congregation is located 15 km east of Tambaram on the Tambaram-Pondicherry highway and due to its close proximity to the city, Kiraipakkam is well connected by buses. The village still retains the ancient name of Kiraipakkam as will be known from the inscription recorded from there (*PLATE XV*).

In an uncultivated field, towards the east of the village and north of the village pond, is a stone slab measuring 155 cm in length and 142 cm in length. It carries on it a nine line inscription in Grantha script and Sanskrit language which though undated is on paleographic ground assigned to 9th century AD¹⁰⁶ and is one of the significant inscriptions recovered from Tondaimandalam belonging to the reign of the Pallavas.

The inscription records the construction of Desavallabha Jinalaya by Amaramudalaguru the Jaina monk and disciple of Mahaviraguru, a pontiff of the *Kumiligana* of the *Yāpanīya Saṅgha*. Amaramudalaguru, according to the same record was instrumental in providing adequate provision for feeding the monks belonging to the *Yāpanīya Saṅgha*.

The *Yāpanīyas* sect of the Jains is known for their reformist attitude and adhered to some of the important traits common to the Digambaras and the Svetambaras such as the acceptance of the Digambaras practice of nudity and the Svetambara belief in the emancipation of women¹⁰⁷. The *Yāpanīyas* for the propagation of Jainism advocated the practice of living in monasteries and deriving their sustenance through agriculture¹⁰⁸. They are an exclusive product of Karnataka Jainism who became powerful group during the 5th to the 14th Century AD¹⁰⁹ and in the later period would have their spread activities by organizing *ganas* or congregation of monks.

Kumuli or *kumudi gana*, which occur in the numerous inscription of Karnataka¹¹⁰ and is referred to in Kiraipakkam inscription was a congregation of monks belonging to the *Yāpanīya Saṅgha* and in this organisation Mahaviraguru was a pontiff under whose tutorship there were many disciples. One such disciple was Amaramudalaguru who was instrumental in establishing the Desavallabha

Jinālaya that catered to the ecclesiastical activities of the *Yapaniya* monks along with the provision for providing food and lodging to them.

The written part of the stone slab is topped by certain representations of a lamp stand depicted on either extremes, followed by a caparisoned horse, a *Kumbha* (pot), a man standing with his left arm placed on the hip, a sickle, corns tied together, a plough and other indistinguishable objects. On the representation of various symbols connected to agriculture and trade such as the sickle, plough, horse and the representation of a male warrior would suggest that they probably represent a merchant guild who were entrusted with the duty of protecting and safeguarding the interest of the *Yāpanīya* headquarters. The later phase of the Pallava period is marked by an increase in land control by religious institutions that simultaneously led to increased agricultural and trade activities and emergence of allied organization¹¹¹. The *Yāpanīyas* because of their unorthodox religious doctrines would have gained popularity in the region hence meriting support from organizations that had wide membership.

This inscription on its own is essential for understanding how the *Yapaniyas* from far away northern part of Karnataka succeeded in spreading their doctrines over the people of the Tondaimandalam region specially after the bhakti movement when it dawned on people to accept different modes of worship.

The area surrounding the place where the inscription has been placed has ruins of an ancient structure covering an area of approximately 900 to 1000 sq., feet. They are the ruins of the foundation stones of the *Jinālaya*, a study of which would reveal that the structure would have had three or more cells constructed out of granite stone, the material readily available from the large hillocks found near the vicinity of the site. Kiraipakkam thus played host to one of the ancient sects of Jaina religion.

The antiquity of the village to the Pallava period is further gleaned by the Tamil inscription that has been found recorded on a stone slab near the village tank. The much worn out inscription is dated in the 17th regnal year, AD 886, of the Pallava ruler Kampavarman, states that one *Sankan* gave a gift of land for the maintenance of the village tank¹¹². By considering the agricultural prosperity of Kiraipakkam and its connection with the ancient trade guilds as is understood by the earlier inscription, much attention would have been given to boost the agricultural output of the land. It is this fact that prompted Sankan to donate land so that the yield from it could be utilised to maintain the village tank so as to ensure its maintenance and timely care. Agriculture and its produce would have no doubt sustained this prominent Jaina village.

The village, thus preserve records that go a long way in writing the religious as well as the economic history of the region.

SIRUPAKKAM

This village is located 15 km north of Kanchipuram and is a rich archaeological site with inscriptions, dilapidated temples, with their pillars and idols that lying at present uncared for in and around the village. On the outskirts of the village, near the pond is a dilapidated Śiva temple which has a history dating back to the 10th century AD. Adjoining these ruins is a recently built temple dedicated to Lord Śiva. Earlier, from the ruins of the dilapidated shrine a stone slab was recovered which revealed the Jaina history of the village.

Being exposed to the vagaries of nature for a considerably long time, the inscription is much worn out. Paleographically dated to the 8th-9th centuries AD¹¹³, it records the gift of land to the Jain temple of *Sri-Karanapperumpalli*¹¹⁴. Apart from

this brief information nothing much is available to assess the Jaina history of the place and because of paucity of information nothing can be stated about the donor.

Jainism was a popular religion in these parts of Tondaimandalam since the early centuries of the Christian era and many centres of prominence arose in nearby places such as Tiruparuttikunram and Kanchipuram. The former since the 6th century AD was an important seat of the Jaina monks belonging to the *Nandi Sangha*.

Palli in the Tamil land stands for a temple or a monastery (which was a school or a college)¹¹⁵, and as such *Sri-Karanaperumpalli* at Sirupakkam could have housed a congregation of Jaina monks. The suffix *palli* indicate that its main function was to impart education and other allied activities to the adherents of the faith. This social role played by the Jaina monasteries in the earlier phase went a long way in sustaining the Jaina faith and its continued existence even to the present day. Jainism being essentially a monastic religion, its very sustenance was based on the activities of these *pallis*.

In the aftermath of the *bhakti* movement that brought about large scale temple building activities and propagation of *bhakti* ideals, some centres which were earlier strong bastions of the Jains fell into the hands of the former. The same reason can be attributed to Srikanaperumpalli as no traces of its glorious history remain at present except for the slab carrying the inscription. All that is reminder of the religious history of the place is a ruined Śiva temple which no doubt could have been constructed to counter the influence of the Jaina institution existing there at the time. Nevertheless Jainism played a vital role in the social and religious history of the place and could have in the long run effected the life and thought of the inhabitants.

VENKUNRAM

A predominantly Jain village, Venkunram is located 8 km north-east of Vandavasi in the Tiruvannamalai district. During the period of the Pallavas, this area formed a unit of *Venkunrakōttam*, after which the village gets its name. Venkunram and its neighboring villages such as those falling within a radius of 8 to 10 km as Kilsattamangalam, Salukkai, Ponnur are even to the present day stronghold of Jainism. Some of them like Kilsattamangalam have rich vestiges of Jaina history dating to the early 8th century AD.

Venkunram is at present populated by many Jain families. Their habitation cluster around the Parsvanatha temple that is located on the south end of the village. Built of modest proportion, the temple comprises of a *garbhagriha*, *antarāla*, *ardhamandapa* and a *mandapa*. The *garbhagriha* enshrines Parsvanatha. Towards the north of the *garbhagriha* facing the south is a shrine for 7th Tirthankara Chandraprabha. Facing this is a shrine for Dharmadevi. These are enclosed within a *prakara* with a *gōpura* entrance on the northern side. The entire temple complex has a very modern appearance and is devoid of any ancient architectural style, which render the dating of the temple to an ancient period impossible and neither can it be stated as to when the Jains came to occupy the place. As stated the history of Jainism at Venkunram would be better understood in the light of its neighboring villages and from where there would have been an exodus of Jains to these areas.

Of great significance in the study of this place is an image of a Tirthankara that is kept in the *mandapa* on the eastern corner of the temple (*PLATE XVI*). This image has been carved in relief on a conical block of granite. The image is carved utilizing the entire space available and the Tirthankara is shown seated in the *padmāsana* posture on a simple pedestal. The Tirthankara is

sculptured with a round face, elongated earlobes, shaven head and broad shoulders with wide set comparatively thin arms, the palms of which are placed one beneath the other over the crossed legs. Above this the *mukkudai* has been carved utilizing the top of the stone block. The fold marks on the stomach of the Tīrthaṅkara have for the first time been depicted in the sculpture here. There is no *lanchana* or symbol by which the Tīrthaṅkara could be identified. Thus, on the basis of the absence of the *lanchana* and the style of representation, the sculpture has been dated to the 8th century AD¹¹⁶.

According to the villagers, this image was brought from Vazhuvur, a nearby village where it was lying uncared. Apart from this there is no other ancient Jaina vestige, but suffice it be to state that Jainism did have a beginning here in 7th-8th century AD when structural temples with sculptures of their divinities became a focal point for the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants.

VALLIMALAI

Vallimalai the center of Jaina art and architecture is located in the Vellore district. The geography of the place with a steep hillock and natural caverns, provided an ample place for the Jaina monks to carry out their religious duties.

At Vallimalai are executed some of the finest sculptures of Jaina art but these have a Ganga style¹¹⁷ Ganga ruler Rajamalla's inscription are recorded from the place which record donations made to these Jaina centers.

The entire hillock has been divided into three parts of exhibiting Jaina art. The first set of carving is seen within the natural cavern atop the hillock. On the eastern face of the cavern is the sculpture of Vardhamana mahavira. On the Northern part of the hillock is another natural cavern. Here in three groups of sculptures are seen along with traces of the paintings.

The first carving consists of two larger image of Tirthankaras (*PLATE XVII A*). One of them is represented with a hood cobra, hence indicating that it was Parsvanatha. To the proper right of the panel is the carvings of Mātanga and Siddhāyika.

The most prominent of this group of sculpture is the image of a goddess shown in high relief. She is seated and is armed with four hands. She is identified with Śrūta devī (*PLATE XVII B*) and carries a *kundika* in the left arm, the right is in *abhaya*, and the upper two arms carry *aṅkusa* and *pāsa*. She is having a single hood snake canopy. These culminate in the highwater mark in the development of Jaina art at Tondaimandalam.

The second group of carvings are distinguished by two inscriptions¹¹⁸ belonging to the 9th century AD and is engraved in the Telugu and Kannada script. It records the carving of the two inscriptions. The Tīrthaṅkara sculptures are flanked by *chauri* bearers.

The third group of sculptures has six figures in a row. The central part sits in the *Padmasana* and is identified as Mahavira¹¹⁹ It has a circular *chhatravali*. The inscriptions above the sculpture is written in the Kanarese language of Rajamalla I and records the foundation of the shrine by the king. Similar portions occur in the Ganga donations made to the Siyyamangalam shrine.

The most refined of the Jaina sculptures is seen towards the southern part of the above cavern (*PLATE XVII C*). They mark the introduction of various symbols and *asthamaṅgalas* which sets it apart from all other known early sculptures in Tondaimandalam. On the face of the large natural rock surface, is the figures of Jaina divinities such as Ambika and Tīrthaṅkara. There are three sets of carving here. One of them show the Jina in *dhyāna* seated under a tree and

has ornamental designs such as the *chhatravali* and the flying figures carrying garlands. These are the auspicious Jaina symbols.

Near this is an important figure of Ambika *yakshi*, wherein she is seated in the *ardhaparyankasana* posture. She is adorned with a crown, a *chchhatravali* and is two armed. Towards the left of the *yakshi* is a standing attendant.

There are other sculptures within the natural cavern nearby, and this include the sculpture of a Tīrthaṅkara carved atop the natural cavern. There is also found a Chaumukha or Sarvatobhadrika¹²⁰ from Vallimalai. In this in each direction of the square slab is carved the images of the Tīrthaṅkaras.

Thus in the light of the above evidences it is to be concluded that Jainism received a strong support from the Ganga rulers who were largely responsible for carving and introducing sculptural art in Tondaimandalam. But in the over all scenario the credit goes to the Pallava rulers for leaving their boundaries open for any rulers to come and propagate the latter's religious sect.

CHINNAPALAPAKKAM (PLATE XVIII)

Chinnapalapakkam is a small village located 19 km south-west of Vellore and is well connected by buses plying from there. At present a predominantly agricultural village, it was once host to the Jaina ascetics patronized by the royal houses and wielding considerable social influence on the life and thought of the people of the time. On the western part of the habitation area and at half a kilometer west of the ploughed field is a Sarukkumalai, a hillock standing 300 meters high above ground level. At the top of its eastern face is a natural cavern with a natural spring on the southern side, overlooking Kilarasumpattu river and the village.

Kusaladum-guhai, as the natural cavern is referred to by the villagers, contains Jaina vestiges dating to the time of the Pallavas. The cavern measures 6 meters in length and 2 meters in height and has opening on both its eastern and western directions. The earliest Jain remains here is a stone bed that has been chiseled in the east west orientation, measuring approximately 180 cm in length and 115 cm in width. In the north-eastern interior of the cavern are the remnants of a brick platform which measure 2.60 meters in length and 2 meters in width and has been built using large size bricks of 24 cm in length and 19 cm in width.

On the western exterior of the cave wall, a five-line inscription in Tamil script and Tamil language furnishes the religious significance of the cavern. The record is dated to the 19th year of the reign, 869 AD of Pallava king Nripatungavarman¹²¹. The inscription states that Siriyanangai the concubine of the chieftain of Pangalanādu, on the behalf of her valorous son built a *Srikoil*. Pangalanadu, is a *nadu* unit of Palkunrakottam in Tondaimandalam. The *Srikoil* was dedicated to *Simhanandi*, a Jain monk from Pennagadam as merit for his services to the cause of Jainism.

No structural or sculptural edifices of either a temple or a Jain divinity has been found in the vicinity of the natural cavern or the village. In the light of these facts and on the basis of the inference drawn from material evidence found within the cavern, the *Srikōil* mentioned in the inscription could be taken to refer to the brick built structure found therein¹²².

The earlier reading of the inscription suggested that Siriyanangai was the wife of the Pangalanādu chieftain¹²³ but a re-reading of the inscription suggest that she was rather a concubine, as is understood from the occurrence of the word *Sulaigal*, a Kannada terminology¹²⁴. This would suggest the influence of Jain laity from Karnataka and the use of their distinct linguistic terminology in the northern part

of the Tamil land due to its geographical, political and cultural proximity with the region. From the sociological point too the record is significant, as it is the first of its kind where the status of a lady in the royal household has been mentioned.

Simhanandi's nativity of Pennagadam has been identified with Pennathur, a village 5 km from Chinnapalapakkam¹²⁵. It would be more appropriate to identify Pennagadam with Pennagaram, near Vellore, lying amidst the many ancient and living Jain villages, prominent being Agalur and Tondur which have revealed Jain vestiges dating from 4th century AD.

The unusually large bricks used for the construction of the *Srikoil* are characteristic of the Pallava period and are similar to the bricks that have been unearthed from Kanchipuram excavations and stratigraphically dated to the period of the Pallavas¹²⁶.

In the absence of any sculptural or such corroborative evidences, the remains at Chinnapalapakkam provide valuable evidence to the exalted position that the Jain monks were accorded in the society. Acknowledging their sovereignty to the Pallava monarchs, the royal houses of their chieftains actively patronised the Jain institutions. Taking into consideration the inscription from Kilarasumpattu and Chinnapalapakkam the natural cavern supported by the royal houses functioned as a prominent retreat for the adherents of the Jain faith.

KILARASUMPATTU

Located in the fertile zone of Vellore and sheltered by hillocks in its peripheral region, Kilarasumpattu is a predominantly agricultural village located 22 km south of Vellore. On the north western part of the village is a hillock approximately 300 metres in height above ground level which the villagers commonly refer to Sarakkumalai . The area within the radius of half a kilometre

from its foothill is covered with rocky outcrops. On the rock face of one such rocky outcrop is engraved a Pallava inscription in Tamil script and language. Being exposed to the vagaries of nature for centuries, the inscription is wearing out.

This three-line inscription is dated to the 4th regnal year of Pallava ruler Nandivarman III corresponding to 850 AD¹²⁷. The inscription states that a chieftain Kali Kuri Arasar caused to be made a Pali. Furnishing this information, the record ends with the name *Sri Mallan Tukkili*.

Kali Kuri Arasar of the inscription has been identified as a Ganga chieftain who acknowledged the sovereignty of Pallava Nandivarman III¹²⁸. He, according to the inscription is said to have been responsible for making a *pali* or stone bed for the monk of the Jaina order. These were carved generally on rock surfaces within natural caverns or under rock shelters where the monks stayed during their *varsha-vasa* or rainy retreat. The stone bed referred to here was caused to be carved for the benefit of Sri Mallan Tukkili, a Jain monk who, as the name suggests would have in all probability hailed from Karnataka¹²⁹.

On the absence of natural cavern or any stone bed within the vicinity of the inscription, the stone bed mentioned in the inscription is reported to have been untracked¹³⁰. It can be inferred, however, that the stone bed should be taken to refer to the one that is found within Kusaladum Guhai (cavern) atop Sarakkumalai that lies at a distance of half a kilometre from the spot where the inscription is engraved. The stone bed chiselled on the rock surface is comparatively large with a length of 158 cm and a breadth of 180 cm. A later date Pallava inscription of Nripatunga¹³¹, engraved on the cliff of the natural cavern make no reference to the stone bed, probably because it was already in existence at the place thus demeriting its mention in the later inscription (a detailed study of the site is given under Chinnapalapakkam).

Due to the political and cultural proximity that existed during the period between the Pallava and the Ganga regions, it was natural that the Ganga chieftains who were patronisers of the Jain religion made donations for the monks of the order. Apart from the religious significance, it is pertinent to note that Kilarasumpattu might have wielded considerable political and territorial significance that resulted in direct patronage of religions associated with the rulers.

KARUPPANKUNRU (*PLATE XIX A*)

Karuppankunru, one of the significant Jain places, has yielded Jain sculptures and an associated inscription dating to the 8th-9th centuries AD. This tiny non-descript village is located on the Cheyyar road that lies 22 km south-east of Madurantakam in the Chengleput district. Rich in agricultural production, the physiography of the village is a composite of both plain, cultivable land and dry mountainous zone with hillocks forested with wild shrubs and plants and, carrying boulders of numerous size which have formed few rock shelters atop the hillock. Of these hillocks, Karuppankunru and \bar{U} simalai both approximately 250 feet high above ground level are noted for the ancient Jain relics.

As one scales up the Karuppankunru hillock from the southern side, at the top of the hillock is a brick built raised platform that has been plaster coated and measures 115 cm in length and 109 cm in width. Near this is a rock shelter on the floor surface of which a stone bed measuring 4 ½ feet in length and 2 feet in breadth has been chiseled smooth in the north-south orientation.

At about 30 feet west of these, a narrow crevice that runs from the tip to the foothill separates a huge granite boulder from the rest of the hillock. As one descends down the northern foothill of the hillock on the west face of the boulder, the sculptures of the Jaina \bar{T} irthaṅkaras have been carved (*PLATE XIX B*). Here with

reference to the identification of the Tīrthaṅkaras, there are no inscriptional evidences or *lāñchanas* (symbols) that could be used to identify the Tīrthaṅkara except that of Parsvanatha. These images are the *tri-tīrthika* images of the Jaina tirthankaras where the first, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Tirthankaras have been represented. The Digambaras style such representation of three images as *ratnatraya*¹³².

Adinatha

Among the above, the first sculpture is of the first Jaina Tirthankara Adinatha that has been carved within a square niche. In the lower part of the niche, the pedestal is chiseled by horizontal bars and has alternately cut vertical bars. Above the pedestal the Tīrthaṅkara is shown seated in the *ardhapadmasana* and engrossed in deep contemplation. The palms are opened and placed over the crossed legs. The Tīrthaṅkara has broad shoulders, a broad face, elongated earlobes and hair forming into curls resembling the button shape that is backed by a semi-circular decorated aureole surmounted by the characteristic three tired umbrella or *mukkudai*. At the back-rest of the pedestal and on either side at the shoulder level of the Tīrthaṅkara, the *chamaradharis* have been-carved upped the level of their waist. They sport conical headdress and hold *chamars* in their left and right hand respectively. Above the charmaradharis and on the top extreme corners of the niche there are floriated scroll designs.

Mahavira

At about 5 feet from the described sculpture of Adinatha, there is an identical workmanship on the face of the granite boulder. In comparison to the earlier described image, this image has been sculpted within a fairly large square niche. Within this, leaving a gap of 8 cm on either side of the niche another outline has been carved within which the sculpture of a Tīrthaṅkara with his associated

paraphernalia has been carved. The pedestal has been carved using two parallel horizontal bars separated by a broad plain bar unlike the ornamented middle space as seen in the earlier sculpture. On the pedestal, Mahavira is shown seated in meditation in the *ardhapadmasana* with palms facing the sky and placed above his legs. The shoulder is chiseled broad and the arms form a fine angle at the place where the elbow rests on the lap. With a youthful body and broad shoulders, the image with a smiling countenance has an oval face, with finely chiseled eyes and elongated earlobes. The head of the Tīrthaṅkara has been decorated at the back with a finely decorated aureole with its flames and atop which is a *mukkudai*. The back-rest of the pedestal has been indicated by two vertically placed bars topped by a horizontal bar. On either side of this, two *chamaradharis* have been carved. Both the figures are royally dressed with conical headgear, *kundalas*, *hāras* and robes and hold *chamaras* in their left and right hand respectively with either of the arms of both the *chamaradharis* dangling in front. The niche has been separated above the *chamaradharis* and the *mukkuddai* with scroll designs.

Parsvanatha (PLATE XIX C)

Descending down the crevice, towards the west of the foothill and near the base of the large boulder one comes across a comparatively large boulder. Herein has been sculpted one of the finest and innovative style of rock cut art that despite its miniature size, remained unique in the Jain art of the northern part of ancient Tondaimandalam. The circular rock boulder has been cut on its eastern face in the form of a rock-cut shrine, utilizing the rock leaving 2 meters from the tip of the boulder.

Within this niche the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara Parsvanatha along with his *sāsanadēvatās* has been sculptured. With a well proportioned body, round face, elongated ear lobes, broad shoulders and long arms with palms facing

inwards, the Tirthankara is shown standing in the *Kayōtsarga* posture. He is protected by five-hooded snake king Dharanendra, the *yaksha* of Parsvanatha. The fangs of the snake have been sculptured wide and large. On the right side of the Tirthankara, Dharanendra *yaksha* is depicted offering *anjali* to his master and the artist has taken great care in exhibiting the supreme reverence of Dharanendra to his master by depicting his eyes closed and palms folded. Befitting his position as the king of the snakes, Dharanendra is decked with ornaments such as the *patra kundalas* and kingly robes.

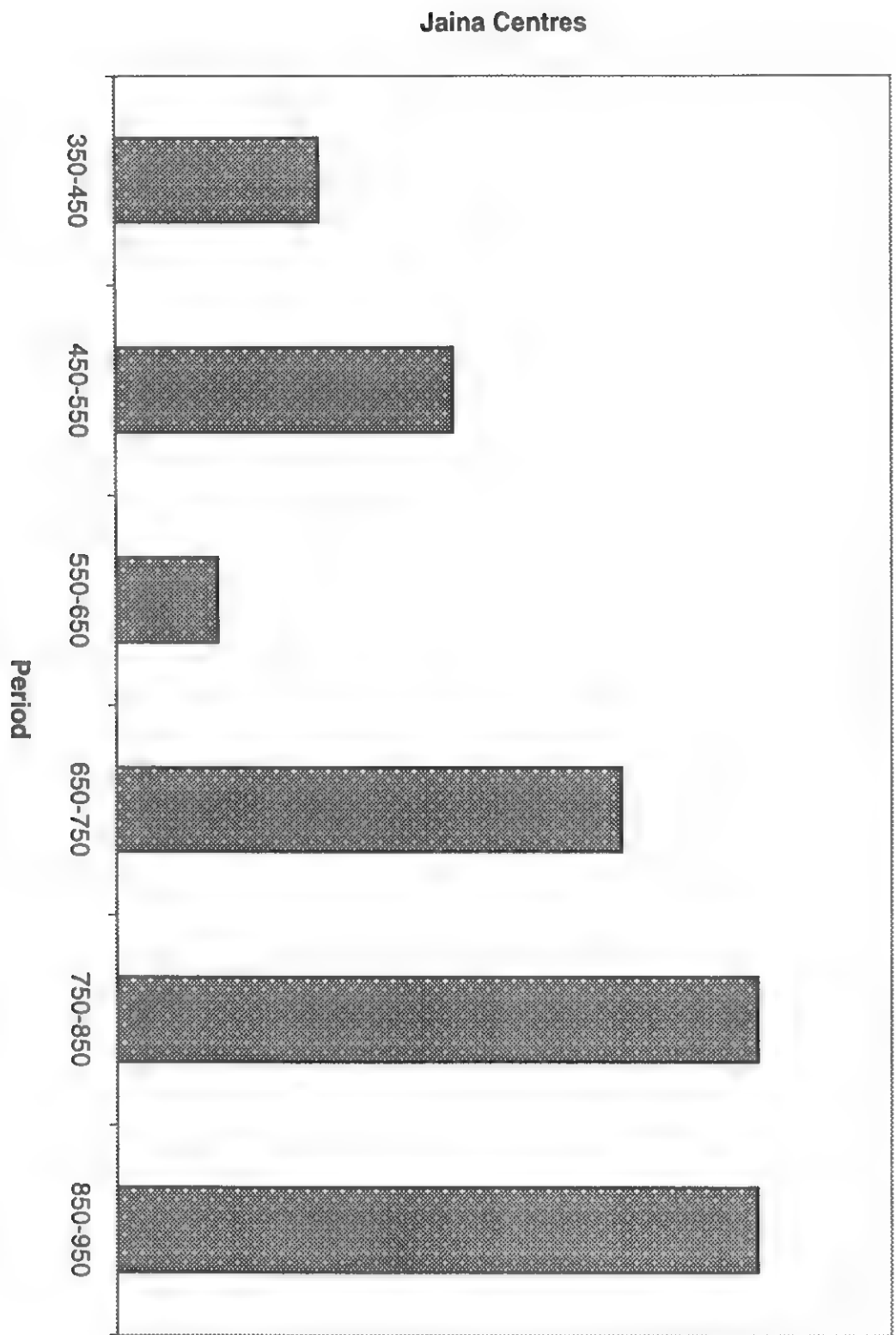
On the left of the Tirthankars, Yakshi Padmavati, the consort of Dharanendra, stands in the *dvibhanga* posture with palms held unto the chest and offering *anjali* to the Tirthankara. She has a single hooded snake canopy and is depicted wearing a waist dress that reaches upto her knee and she is adorned with the *kundalas*, bangles and *haras*. One notable feature of this group of sculpture is the absence of Kamatha suggesting that it was not the intention of the artist to sculpt the *upasarga* episode associated with the life of Parsvanatha.

This look alike rock cut miniature shrine has been surmounted with a *śikhara* resembling the four sided *śikharas* found atop the many relief's of the Pallavas at Mamallapuram styled as *samacaturāsra kūtas* with *nāgara śikharas* representing *ēkatala vimanas*. The *śikhara* and the shrine as a composite whole has been cut frontally with the rest of the rock mass left uncut.

Inscription

On the top right of the *śikhara* of the miniature rock cut shrine is an inscription of four lines engraved in *grantha* script and Tamil language. It states that Vasudeva Siddhanta Bhatarā who was the establisher of the 'caturvimśati' or

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the twenty-four built the *tēvāram*¹³³. On the basis of the paleography, the inscription has been dated to the 8th – 9th centuries AD¹³⁴.

The meaning of the word *tēvāram* has proved elusive and of its varied interpretations, the word could be taken to mean 'private ritual worship'¹³⁵. By considering this, the term would be taken to refer to the miniature shrine that has been sculpted in the vicinity of the inscription and has been described above.

Vasudēva Siddhānta Bhatāraka mentioned in the epigraph, has close phonetic relation with the name of Jain monks belonging to the Dravida Sangha and mentioned in the records from Karnataka¹³⁶. It is very important to note here that these inscriptions mention number of Jaina monks with the title of *Siddhanta* and who were closely related to the consecration of Pārśvanatha's shrines¹³⁷. On similar grounds *Vasudēva Siddhānta* also consecrated the rock shrine at Karuppankunru. The erection of a *tēvāram* or a shrine by a monk for the Jaina divinities indicate that a separate class of monks had emerged powerful enough because of their role in the consecration of images. This suggests that slowly and steadily there emerged a separate class of monks who laid great stress on ritual worship.

The adherents of the faith had influenced Jainism in Tamil Nadu to a great extent mainly from the Karnataka region because of its close political connections and geographical proximity, and this influence was seen on the Jaina relics found at Karuppankunru.

Conclusion

A survey of the related historical centres reveals a set pattern. Initially, they were simple resorts of the Jaina laity but later on these developed on the lines of the brahmanical temples. The Jaina influence spread throughout the length and

breadth of Tondaimandalam A study of these sites has revealed that contrary to the picture gleaned from literatures, the *bhakti* movement though definitely checked the growth of Jainism, the latter with its inherent qualities was able to reassert its influence. Another major factor that arises out of the study is that even during the peak of the *bhakti* movement when the Nāyanmārs in particular were asserting their devotion, in none of the centres where both brahmanical groups and Jains were existing is there any incidence of willful destruction. Some of the earlier resorts of Jain monks such as Siyyamangalam, in the post-*bhakti* came to be embellished with sculptures. Ritual worship and worship of *yakshi* gained prominence mainly during the post-*bhakti* period. The sculpture of Ambika from Panchapandavarmalai, references to the gift of gold to the *yakshi* shrine at Kilsattamangalam and the occurrence of the word *tēvāram* further illustrate the metamorphosis that Jainism underwent from its early rigid religious practices to one in which there was greater assimilation of brahmanical practices.

The Jaina institutions received land donations and patronage from all sections of the society. The chieftains and the members of the royalty vied with each other in the development of the institution. All the above aided in the firmer establishment of Jainism in the Tondaimandalam.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER IV

JAINA MONASTIC GROUPS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Monasticism is the collective life of the monks and nuns organised at a fixed place where they live under one authority for spiritual liberation¹. Being a monastically oriented religion the ascetic organisation in Jainism has been in existence since the time of the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara Parsvanatha². The Sangha consisted of a group of four Tīrthas namely Sādhus (monks), Sādhvis (nuns), Śrāvakas (laymen) and Śrāvikas (laywomen). It played a vital role in the organisation of its members and assisted in the spread of Jaina ideals throughout the land. The influence that the monks and the Saṅgha had and continue to have on the religious life of laymen is very significant with regard to Jainism. Numerous inscriptions and literatures provide us with the names of monks who have guided the life of the lay devotees.

In the initial phase of Jaina monasticism, the Jaina recluses followed the rules guiding the life of a monk as ordained in the Jaina texts such as the *Uttarādhyayana*. It is a compilation of the teachings of the last sermon of Mahavira, contains rules and regulations, the restrictions and precautions that the monk should follow to uphold his vow³. The text explicitly commands the monks to stay in deserted house; burial ground or under a tree in order to avoid all the faults, which violate the spirit of monkhood.

Hence in accordance with the above rules, its early history in the Tamil land is characterised by unostentatious structures of Jaina place of worship and simple living of its ascetic followers. The earlier Jaina monks led a wandering life throughout the year except during the rainy season. Their *varsha-vāsa* (rainy retreat) were natural caverns atop hillocks, located faraway and in remote areas

from the habitations. In the natural caverns the only objects of comfort were the stone-beds that were chiseled by the lay devotees in reverence for the monks. The stone beds found throughout the length and breadth of the Tamil land are of two varieties - those with stone cut pillow and the others without them. The stone beds have been referred to in the numerous Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions as *Pali*, *Kal*, *Urai*, *tana*, *cayana* and *munru*⁴. These have an average measurement of 150 cm to 183 cm in length and 60 cm to 120 cm in breadth. In a natural cavern inhabited by Jaina monks, it is natural to find one or two beds, examples of which are seen at Mamandur, Dalavanur, Neganurpatti etc. Natural caverns in Tondaimandalam and other parts of the Tamil land have also yielded caverns with more than three and at times seven to ten stone beds all cut neatly and spread throughout the cavern in various orientations. Some of the finest examples of these come from Panchapandavarmalai, Tondur, Uranithangal et al in the districts of Vellore, Tindivanam and Gingee in the northern part of Tamil Nadu. The large numbers of stone beds in a single cavern are indicative of the collective stay of the monks during the rainy season. This was in adherence to the concept of *ahimsa* that the Jains followed strictly. For it is during the rainy season that insects and other living organisms multiply and hence this period was to be avoided by the monks for the wandering lest they should unknowingly hamper plant and animal life.

With the passage of time changes crept in the Jaina order and this led to division of the main church into various monastic groups. The earliest of the major schisms was the divisions of Jaina sect into the *Śvētāmbaras* and the *Digambaras*. Though there was no fundamental differences between the two sects, the division was mainly regarding the 1). the concept of nudity- the *Śvētāmbara* monks wear white clothes and adorn their idols with ornaments and clothing, the *Digambara* monks follow nudity and the same concept is applied to their idols, 2).

Digambaras hold that women cannot attain liberation, whereas the Svetambaras hold the contrary view, 3). and the significant difference with regard to the life of monks, the Svetambara monks can collect their food from different houses whereas the Digambara monks take food standing in one house only⁵. These two sects were divided into a number of schools, orders and smaller sects. Only a few of these sects owe their origin to teachers whose views differed from those that were generally acknowledged.

The ascetic divisions of the Digambara were the *Saṅgha* (Mūla Saṅgha and the Drāvida Saṅgha etc.), *Gaṇa* (*Deśi*, *Sena*, *Kanur* etc.), *Gaccha* (*Pustaka* etc.) and *Ānvaya* (*Kundakunda* etc.)⁶. A group of three monks was called as a *Gana*; a band of seven monks was designated as *Gaccha*; and regular community of monks as known as *Saṅgha*⁷.

According to the tradition of the Digambaras, the Mūla Saṅgha (the original community) was divided into four schools for practical reasons in Samvatsara 26 by the great teacher Arhadbali (known also as Guptigupta or Visakha). Their heads were four of his pupils and the schools were⁸:

1. Nandi Saṅgha
2. Sēna-Saṅgha
3. Simha-Saṅgha
4. Dēva-Saṅgha

These major congregations were further divided into several sub-schools. The monks affix certain words to their personal names that indicate their affiliation to the concerned Saṅgha. The ascetics carry a peacock-fan in their hands and are greeted with the word '*dharmavrdhi*'⁹. Apart from these some of

the monastic groups emerged as break away Sanghas and vary in some points with regard to religious practices.

The Jaina monasteries appear in the Tamil land during the early centuries of the Christian era. These were built and supported by laymen and members of the royalty. Supported by land donations, these monastic organisations emerged as powerful institutions since the 3rd- 4th centuries AD. Some of the important monastic groups that had their presence in Tondaimandalam and over the whole of Tamil land are the Nandi Sangha, Dravida-Sangha and the Yapaniya-Sangha.

Drāvida-Sangha

During the early centuries of the Christian era Jaina faith had become gradually established in Tondiamandalam and by the close of the 5th Century AD, they had emerged as powerful social and economical group. According to the *Darśanasara* of Devasēna, the Drāvida Saṅgha was established by Vajranandi, a pupil of Puṣṭyapāda at Madurai¹⁰. The Saṅgha was apparently formed as a result of the dispute that took place over such trivial question as whether black gram should be consumed or not¹². The followers of this school permit bathing in cold water and are at freedom to engage in commercial transactions¹³. Drāvida Saṅgha, is perhaps a designation indicating some geographical limitation of the Mūlasaṅgha¹⁴.

Yāpanīya-Saṅgha

According to Dēvasēna, the author of the *Darśanasara*, the Yāpanīya Sangha was formed by Srikalasa, a Svetambara monk in A.D.148¹⁵. *Bhadrabahucarita*, though a later work of the 15th century AD. states that the Yāpanīyas were a section of the Digambara community of lower clan who put on

white robes as against the Digambara practice of nudity. Contrary to the Digambaras, the yāpanīyas advocated that women can attain salvation. The yapaniyas were mainly popular in the Saundatti taluk and Belgaum district of Karnataka, as indicated by the large number of inscriptions found from these localities.

The Yāpanīyas attained popularity within a short span of time and numerous inscriptions from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu indicate their fame far and wide. Their popularity was mainly due to the flexibility in their religious pantheon, introduction of *yaksha* and *yakshi* cult, establishment of religious institutions owing to grants at the hands of the royalty and lay followers. The yapaniyas were staunch supporters of living in monasteries. They even indulged in propitiation of planetary divinities. They have the custom of eating from the palm (*panitalabhōjanam*) and they carry a flywhisk made from peacock feathers and the worshipping of images¹⁶.

The proliferation of the various monastic organisations in the Tamil land was a result of the Jaina diffusion and the proselytising zeal of the monks affiliated to the various Sanghas or congregations from Karnataka. The Sangha and the monks associated with them were instrumental in taking Jaina ideals to the common masses in the cities and in the remote areas of the Tamil land.

The first signs of the practice of living in monasteries by the monks are noted in the 2nd century A.D. *Pravachanasāra*, a classic text authored by the Kundakundāchārya the revered Digambara monk of the Mūla Saṅgha¹⁷. His contribution to the cause of the spread and development of Jainism in south India has remained unparalleled. He has been identified as the contemporary of one Sivakumara Maharaja by the 12th century commentator Jayasena in his

commentaries on *Pancāstikaya* and *Pravacanasāra*¹⁸. This Sivakumara Maharaja has been identified with the Pallava ruler Sivaskanda¹⁹ and considering this, Kundakundacharya would have played a vital role in gaining royal patronage to Jainism in the Tondaimandalam region. In the early centuries of the Christian era, after the denunciation by the Digambaras of the Jaina canon formed at Pataliputra, the onus fell upon the monks of the Digambaras to respond to the needs of the Jaina community to give it a social, political and cultural standing²⁰. During such a time Kundakundacharya played a vital role by composing works on Jaina ethics and morality in Prakrit on the lines of the teachings of the revered teachers of the faith.

Jainism being a monastic religion much emphasis was laid on the conduct and practices of the monks who were seen as the guardians of the Jaina faith and the lay followers were to emulate them in their day- today affairs. Hence, Kundakundacharya in his works gave much emphasis on the codification of the rules and regulations of Jaina monks. The important of his works are the *Mūlacāra* and the *Pravacanasāra*.

The third book of the *Pravacanasāra* is dedicated to the monastic aspect of Jainism. The monks of the Digambara order of southern Jainism adhered to the rules guiding life of an ascetic. The text indicates that the Jaina monks lived in groups and the head of these was called *Gaṇin*. Absolute non-attachment is a pre-requisite for a Jaina monk. A monk has to take to five vows, fivefold carefulness, control of five senses, pulling out the hair, six fold *avasyakās*, nakedness, not taking bath, sleeping on ground, not cleansing the teeth, taking meals in a standing posture and taking only one meal a day (v.8-9). These are the primary virtues of an ascetic and those who don't follow them is a defaulter. The preceptor who initiates him in to the ascetic fold is known as *pravrajya-dāyaka* and who helps him to correct his path incase of default is a *niryāpaka* (v.10). One of the notable point in

the text has been with regard to women and asceticism. Here in keeping with the Digambara view, the author strongly states that women cannot attain liberation as they cannot follow total renunciation and as clothing is an essential pre-requisite for them (v. 7 to v.14).

Kundakundacharya also composed 84 *Prākṛit Pahudās* on traditional texts to outline the rules for the Digambara community of the South²¹. Of these the *Bhava-pāhuda* states that the path to eternal bliss lay in incalculating the three jewels of Right faith, Right Knowledge and the Right Conduct²². These monastic groups with their strict adherence to the Jaina doctrines were operating in large numbers particularly over the Tondaimandalam region because of its close proximity with Karnataka region. This is evidenced by the numerous references to the Jaina practices in literature of the period.

Jaina Sanghas during the Pallava period and their activities

Two phases are seen in the history of Jaina monasticism over Tondaimandalam during the Pallavas. First, is the *pre-bhakti* history of these institutions when the Saṅgha began to be established in the region. Second, is the *post-bhakti* role of the Saṅgha in the proliferation of the Jainism. The latter was particularly the result of the contact with the congregation from Karnataka.

The earliest inference to the establishment of Jaina monastery in Tondaimandalam is known from Tiruppadiripuliyur (modern Cuddalore). It is for the first time mentioned in the *Lokavibhāga*, a Jain manuscript on cosmology. This was originally a Prakrit work that was translated into Sanskrit by Sarvanandin during the 22nd year of the reign of Pallava ruler Simhavarman II in A.D.436. In the Tēvāram hymns of Appar, he as Jain is said to have joined this monastery in the initial years. This undoubtedly would show the popularity of the monastery

that prompted scholars to be enrolled therein. Acharya Samantabhadra, the revered monk from Śrāvanabelagola is said to have visited this monastery for religious discourses²³. According to the Perīyapūrānam, Thirunāvukkaracar is said to have become a Jaina and was initiated into the Jaina monastery at Pataliputiram.

The direct reference to a Jaina monastic community is also known from the Pallankoil copper plate of Simhavarman III²⁴. While describing about the grant made to the Vardhamana temple at Tiruparruttikunram, it mentions the name of the Nandi Saṅgha that was operating even as early as the 6th century AD at Kanchipuram. The grants records the gift of the *pallichchandam* villages of Perunagar *nadu* and Tamar to the revered Vajranandi of the Nandi Saṅgha²⁵. From this it is very much evident that the Sangha had begun to play a vital social and economic role in the society from the time of the Pallavas. They were emerging as landed magnates with economic prerogatives deriving out of the granted land. Simultaneously, they were builders of the Vardhamanishwara Dharmatirtha or the present Mahavira temple at Tiruparruttikunram. Monks from the organisation would have enjoyed considerable support from the members of the royalty so as to merit land donations much nearer the Pallava capital.

The other source for studying the royal support to the monastic organisation of the Jains is known through the Hosekote plates of the Ganga ruler Avinita. This record the donation of land made by the Pallava queen of Simhavarman III for the monks of the Yāpañīya Saṅgha. To merit its record in the form of a copper plate would suggest the social and economic strong hold enjoyed by these organisations. The members of the royalty took great credit in associating with these Saṅghas. The Pallavas in particular, by these grants to various Saṅghas enhanced the role of the latter in the society and gave them legitimacy. These activities contributed to the proliferation of the Jaina sect.

With the spread of the activities of the Saṅgha, there were drastic changes in the monastic community who were caught in between upholding the original tenets and to uphold the needs of the Saṅgha. This resulted in slight relaxation of general rules guiding the monks. It was because of this that Sangha could emerge as independent economic entities such as holding large number of *pallichchandam* lands. It was because of the same reason that the monks could play vital political role as preceptors. In the early medieval period the preceptors occupied a place of great importance in the life of the faithful. They were popular not only with the community of monks but also with the lay fraternity. Kings, feudatories, ministers, merchants, and commoners all obeyed their preceptors for the sake of righteous and steadfast life. The preceptor exercised considerable authority over the monks and nuns.

Gradually, the adoration of the preceptor developed into a cult. Numerous memorial stones were erected in honour of the preceptor by lay or spiritual disciples and ritual worship was offered to these memorials. One particular inscription from Chinnapalapakkam records the construction of a Srikōil by Siriyanangai to the monk Simhananandi. Provisions for the sacred abulations of the idol and gifts for the purchase of garden indicate that the settled monks performed ritual worship of the deity in temples. The Saṅgha to which the monk belonged has not been identified but this nevertheless would indicate his reverence in the society. Inscriptions registering gifts of villages in favour of monks living in monasteries also demonstrate the former's popularity. Lithic records and epigraphs often mention about erection of monasteries and provisions thereof for the maintenance of monks and teachers. This enhanced their position and enabled them to emerge as frontrunners in organising charity such as distribution of food,

medicine, education, and residence. These activities helped in the social consolidation of the sect in the locality.

From Tondaimandalam evidences have been found that would further strengthen the theory that the credit for the strong foundation of Jainism in Taondaimandalam and in whole of Tamil land is attributed to the monastic activities of the Jaina monks from Karnataka. One such evidence is from Kiraipakkam, which lies about 12 km from Tambaram. *Kumuli* or *kumudi gaṇa*, which occur in the numerous inscription of Karnataka and is referred to in inscription from Kiraipakkam was a congregation of monks belonging to the *yapaniya* Sangha and in this organisation Mahaviraguru was a pontiff under whose tutorship there were many disciples. One such disciple was Amaramudalaguru who was instrumental in establishing the Desavallabha Jinalaya that catered to the ecclesiastical activities of the *Yāpanīya* monks along with the provision for providing food and lodging to them.

Nunneries

The inscriptions found from Tondaimandalam in particular and the Tamil land as a whole would suggest the existence of well-established monastic institutions of lady teachers catering to the exclusive needs of women. Here, as the reputed scholar on Jainism, P.B.Desai states, we have to distinguish between ordinary Jaina nuns who renounced this world and between those nuns who were given privileges like the monks and teachers of respective monastic groups²⁶. To the latter category belongs the class of *Kurattiyars* as is known from the inscriptions. This was a regional development by itself and confined to the Tamil land and brought about for special reasons under particular circumstances. The mention of lady disciples and nuns who acknowledged men as their spiritual

preceptors indicate the acceptance of women disciples. The inscriptions from Vedal mentions about the Jaina *peṇ-paḷḷi* that was existing there at the time. In the 9th century inscription from the same place, the nun Kanakavirakuratiyar is stated to be the disciple of Gunakirti Bhattarar²⁷. Further, even as early as the 9th Century AD. the Jains had contributed immensely to the needs of women's education. To this field seldom has any other sect given importance as has been given by the Pallavas.

The information gleaned from the Vedal inscriptions is unique with regard to the high position that women enjoyed within the Jaina Saṅgha and the amount of freedom that was granted to her to exercise her right as an educationist and a preceptor. This as will be seen in the later chapter was an attempt at popularising the Jaina creed and to give it a mass appeal. In spite of the rigid stand of the Digambaras regarding women, they gave them right to education and liberty to play meaningful social role. One of the primary reasons for this could also be the subtle influence of ideology of the Yāpanīyas and the Śvātambaras from the Karnataka and northern India respectively. Both these sects strongly advocated the rights of women with regard to attaining liberation and to the role that they ought to play in the society.

The significant role of Jaina monasteries in the spread of Jaina doctrines and their role in the promotion of literary and secular activities, provided a strong platform for their success in the Tamil land. The strict rules for the monks and the laity supported the growth of Jainism in far regions of the land. The success of these monastic religions greatly hindered the advantages that the brahmanical sects had over the society and this resulted in the development of monastic institutions of the Śaivites and the Vaishnavites, on similar grounds of the Jains. The monastic set-up of the Jains is the single largest contribution that they made to channelise

the religion and to put an authoritative head at the helm of the monasteries to monitor the activities of the faith.

The significant effect of the Jaina monastic institutions was the establishment of the Śaiva monasteries on the lines of Jains. Thus we see the emergence of parallel institutions of Śaiva monasteries throughout the region albeit on small scale. These monasteries of Śaivism were attached to the temple initially and later they emerged as independent entities controlling vast assets of land. The early development of monasteries in Śaivism is seen in the 8th-9th centuries AD.

The monks of the Jaina order at Siyyamangalam, Kilsattamangalam and Karuppankunru, played a vital role in the spread of Jaina institutions. Similarly, At Kilsattamangalam there are epigraphic evidences about the existence of a congregation of monks who were fed and taken care of through the donation that were made to the temple. Thus it is seen that the activities of the Jaina Sangha and the monks increased the glory of Jainism and its extended life in the Tamil land despite the rise of the *bhakti* movement and immense anti-Jain sentiments that had spread throughout the region. Jainism survives mainly due to the activities of the monasteries and its dedicated group of monks.

FOOT-NOTES

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19. *Ibid.*, p.19.
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CHAPTER V

CONTRIBUTION OF JAINISM

The Oxford dictionary defines 'religion' as 'a particular system of faith and worship', which has an inbuilt tendency to leave its profound impact on the lifestyles of the inhabitant's viz., society and economy, philosophy, art, architecture and culture. Right through its history in the Tamil Nadu (here in particular reference to Tondaimandalam), Jainism had made a slow and steady penetration into the cultural fabric of the Tamil society, thus in due course leaving its profound impact on all aspects of the society.

The *bhakti* movement and the subsequent rise of the Brahmanical sects, did for a brief period check the growth and influence of Jainism. The latter, had been on the socio-cultural scene of the region for a long time and have had left their profound impact through their distinct trait that distinguished itself from all the other religious beliefs. Their distinct art, architecture, literature, philosophy and social activities created a niche for themselves over the Tondaimandalam area. Even when they were not politically and socially strong, the Jains did manage to contribute and make their influence felt on all major aspects of the society.

The Jaina religion along with its brahmanical counterparts enriched the culture of ancient Tamil country and specifically of Tondaimandalam.

5.1 Contribution to learning

The major contribution of the Jains is seen in the field of Tamil literature. They have composed poems, written works on grammar, compiled lexicons and works on ethics, all of which have created a special niche for the Jains in Tamil literature¹. A brief survey of the early Jaina works is necessary so as to comprehend their literary skill.

Many of the early poems were composed by Jain poet-scholars known as *Cāṇror*. They produced works such as *Kuruntokai*, *Naṭṛinai*, *Maduraikkanci*, *Nāladiyar*, *Paḷamoḷi*, *Aranericcaram* and *Eladi*. Of these *Aranericcaram*, or 'the essence of the way of virtue' authored by Tirumunaippadiyar enunciates the five rules of conduct in Jainism that are essential for governing the lives of both the householder and an ascetic - *ahimsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya* and *parimita-parigraha*². These were mainly concerned with imparting social ethics for the betterment of the society and these had a great impact on the moral fabric of the early Tamil society. Apart from these ethics, the Jaina authors, through their writings, advocated the ideals of renunciation, meditation and salvation. For easy accessibility of their literary compositions to the common people the Jain authors composed their work mostly in Tamil. Here, as the research is confined to Jainism during the Pallava period, the scholar shall confine to undertake the study of the literatures produced during the Pallava period.

The Jaina institution of the *mathas* which was a congregation of monks and nuns were centres of great learning. There are literary compositions that have been authored by Jain scholars who were aided by the active support and contribution made by these institutions. One such monastery, that had played a significant historical role in Tondaimandalam, existed at Patalika. This Patalika has been identified with Pataliputram- the seat of ancient Jain monastery near modern Cuddalore in the South Arcot district of Tamil Nadu³. This monastery gains greater prominence with the translation of prakrit manuscript *Lokavibhāga* of Rishi Simhasuri into Sanskrit by Muni Sarvanandin. This event according to the manuscript is dated to Saka 380, i.e. 437 A.D. The author states that the year correspond to the 22nd regnal year of Simhavarman, the king of Kanchi (Pallava)⁴.

On the basis of the manuscript, the date of accession of the said King can be precisely dated to 415 A D.

By acknowledging the political head of the territory, the Jain scholar had succeeded in gaining political validity to the work and secondly, the fact that the author had chosen to translate a Prakrit work in Sanskrit would indicate a literary legitimisation through the medium of Sanskrit. As noted earlier, the Pallavas being brahmanical followers were great patrons of Sanskrit and perhaps by adopting the medium of Sanskrit, the Jains would have aimed at balancing themselves on par with the Brahmanical sects.

Apart from its literary and historical-political value, the manuscript is important to assess the contribution of Jains to the field of science and cosmography. It consist of eleven *Prākaranas* (parts) – *Jambu dvipavibhāg*, *Lavanasamudra vibhāg*, *Manushakshetra vibhāg*, *Dvipa Samudra vibhāg*, *kalavibhāg*, *Jotir lokavibhāg*, *Bhavanavasi lokvibhāg*, *Adho lokavibhāg*, *Vyantra Lokvibhāg*, *Svarga vibhāg* and *Moksha vibhāg*, and 1536 *anushtubh slokas*. The work opens with an invocation to Lord Jinesvara, the second verse gives the five divisions of the *Puranas* namely *Kshetra*, *Kāla*, *Tīrtha*, *Pramāṇa-purusha* and their *Charita* and the third verse the author introduces the subject with the description of the world⁵ as was taught by Vardhamana Jinendra in the *Samavasaraṇa*⁶. This is the only work of its kind known to such an early phase in the history of the Tamil land where the science of cosmography has been given so much importance. The fact that such a significant work was translated into Sanskrit would indicate its high literary skill and significance. This would also indicate that, by using Sanskrit, the Jain scholar aimed at reaching out to larger sections of the society, both royalty and the learned including and thus in the process introduce them to the Jain philosophy and concept of the world. The

sophistication and scientific thinking of the Jains is no where more explicit than in the said manuscript. Moreover, the fact that the manuscript was translated in the Jaina monastery would indicate the role of the *mathas* as an institution for safeguarding Jaina tenets and philosophy.

Another literature of equal significance is the *Neelakesi*, a work on Jaina philosophy. It derives its name after the protagonists of the story, '*Kali-Neelakesi*' of Pazhayanur⁷. The author of the text remains unknown. The text was composed with the intention of refuting the Buddhist work *Kundalakesi*. Chakravarti has placed the upper limit of the age of *Neelakesi* to the 1st century A.D and the lower limit to the 5th century A.D⁸. References from the *Merumandarapuram* indicate that the *Samaya Divākara Virutti* is the commentry on *Neelakesi* and the commentator is identified with Vamanacharya also known as Malli-sena-Charya⁹, a famous Jaina teacher from Jina Kanchi¹⁰. The story of *Neelakesi* is about the search for the true system of philosophy by Neeli and here in the author of *Neelakesi* has adopted the method of dialogue for philosophical discussion.

The purpose of the treatise was to propagate the Jaina tenets and to indicate the triumph of Jaina philosophy over all other systems. Apart from the Jain philosophy that the literature emanates, they also impart scientific ideas such as the plants are living organisms and are mentioned as *Ēkēndria Jiva*. Along with these is the emphasis on the doctrine of *ahimsā*. Thus, it is noted here that through the medium of literature, the Jains succeeded in putting forth their religious dogmas and philosophies to the lay followers. The emphasis on the science of cosmography in the *Lokavibhāga* and information about the life systems of plants and animals, aided in presenting a scientific understanding of the world around them by the Jains and this was a new technique of presenting itself to the people.

The active participation of the Jains in the literary field, is effected for a brief period by the impact of the *bhakti* movement and its domination by the Alvar and Nayanmar saints, particularly during the 7th to 9th century AD. Their philosophical writings couldn't make much progress and impact on the people against the musical, devotional and bardic style of poetry by the *nayanmar* and the *alvars*. The two latter groups wrote and propagated about the lively god - the legends, stories, their playful activities and the instant support that they extended to the devotees in distress. All these raised them to the forefront, thus in the process sidelining Jainism. But this lasted only till about the 9th century AD when once again, as has been noted earlier, aided by many factors there was resurrection of Jainism. This resulted in literary production on a much larger scale and these apart from influencing the common people, posed a challenge to other religious sects to produce works to match the domination by the Jain scholars.

5.2 The political impact of Jainism

For much longer time, that the Jains had been on the cultural scene of the region, their impact was felt on the political institutions as well. Scholars such as Hart and Kailasapathy, based on the moralising concept of the early Tamil poetry and on the basis of references to such Jain practices such as the *Vatakkiruttal* or death by starvation has indicated the Jain influence on the political authority of the region. It is generally held by most historians that the impact of Jainism considerably reduces after the Kalabhra interregnum particularly on the political field. But the evidences produced by literatures and other archaeological evidences suggest that the Pallava rulers inspite of their adherence to brahmanical sects extended support to the Jains. This is seen from the time of Simhavarman III.

The Pallankoil copper plate inscription, dated to his reign, would suggest the influential role of the Jains, in those times, in and around Kanchipuram that merited the King in donating large scale *pallichchandam* grant to the temple of Varadhamaneesvara (the earliest Jain temple in Kanchipuram, dating to the 6th century AD). The grant of land would indicate the emergence of Jaina institutions as land holders thus to a great extent controlling and influencing the economic and political power of the area concerned. The king by his generous donation, acknowledged the influential role of the Jaina monasteries. The king on the other hand received political recognition from these religious institution which in those times was very necessary for his stability. Through the concept of *dana*, the political authority gained instant recognition and also succeeded in winning over the confidence of an influential group.

After Simhavarman III, the reign of Mahendravarman I perhaps witnessed the greatest influence of Jainism. As discussed at length in the earlier chapters, this period marks the turning point in the social-religious history of the Tamil land. Scholars have generally taken into account the *Periyapuranam* to suggest the Jain adherence of King Mahendravarman I. Avoiding the repetition of the arguments against the set point, the researcher would confine to the impact of Jainism on the political authority of the time. It is well known that Jainism had played a vital role in Tamil land since the 3rd century BC and Mahendravarman I was from his birth, inspite of his brahmanical background, exposed to Jainism because of his grandmother, a Jain from the Ganga territory.

The Ganga princess who was the wife of Simhavarman III because of her Jaina adherence had played a vital role in forging a close political alliance between the Pallavas-the brahmanical followers, and the Gangas of Karnataka-mainly Jain adherents. She had even succeeded in granting land in Karnataka to

the monks of *Yapaniya Sangha*¹¹. Thus, it could be inferred that Mahendravarman I could have since his childhood been exposed to various faiths operating at the time. Being a versatile writer, he composed such magnificent works as the *Mattavilasaprahasana* and the *Bhagavadajjukka*. Though both are farcical plays, they are replete with inferences that would suggest a strong influence of Jaina morality and way of life. Some of which are in the doctrine of *Karma*, the concept of renunciation, the mode of asceticism and the food habits. These would suggest that inspite of the Brahmanical majority, the Jains by their harshness of asceticism coupled with simplicity of their lifestyle and morality had become an enduring force in the land so much as to leave its profound influence on the political authority of the region concerned. After Mahendravarman I, this sort of a political influence is felt in the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

A significant development during the reign of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla is the transformation of the conception of the Pallava kingship from the early monolithic royal dominance to one in which there was sharing of political sovereignty between powerfully locally based persons¹². He is perhaps the only ruler during whose time numerous donations were made to the Jaina institutions throughout the length and breadth of Tondaimandalam. This was a deliberate act on the part of the ruler, because of the political compulsions to be seen as a *bhakta* of all faiths and here particularly Jainism. This because he needed the political support of the rulers from Karnataka and the Muttarayairs all of who had a considerable amount of Jaina population. More than religious, this was a deliberate incorporational tactic of the King in winning over religious support to his political interests. All of the above evidences would suggest the strong political role that the Jains enjoyed even in the most troubled of its times that threatened its very survival.

5.3 The Social influence

The Jains had a great impact on the social life of the people. Ever since their inception on the geographical horizon of Tondaimandalam, the Jains had been noted for their consequential influence on the psychology and social life of its inhabitants. Almost all their literatures are replete with the doctrine of *ahimsa*, a concept in which perhaps no other faith could match the Jains. They preached total respect for all living things whether plants, animals or even the smallest of the insects. The Digambaras tradition forbids their monks from travelling during the rainy season mainly to prevent them from committing any sin such as destroying or tampering small insects or plant life. Hence their cave abodes are referred to as rainy retreats. They even laid down rules for alms taking by the monks, such as they should ensure that they beg for only left over food lest the inhabitants go without food and that they should beg only for a handful of food.

A distinct practice of Jains that is nowhere advocated in any other religion is their concept of *Sallekhanā*. *Sallekhanā* is death by starvation when the monks or lay adherents realise that they are no longer able to carry out their worldly activities as prescribed by the Jain tenants and holy texts. In this the person concerned is to slowly mortify his body by abstaining from food and water.

Along with this were their strict monastic practices. To gain mental control and to prepare a person for any sort of adversary, and to instill a sense of non-materialism, the Jains prescribed harsh practices such as pulling out one's hair with his or her own hands, should stand and eat food, should sleep on harsh grounds. All this left a profound influence on the non-materialistic attitude of the society during the period.

This simplicity of their social life was felt on their art and architecture also. Iconography is often, at one and the same time, the artistic expression of religious fervour, as well as a search for the metaphysical ultimate. The iconic expression of the metaphysical ultimate generally personifies in concrete form, the dogmas and tenets of the various schools of philosophy. Hence, they were used as discourses to appear in the visible stone medium. The iconic representations were formulated on the basic tenets of the school to enable the lay devotees to establish an immediate personal rapport with the Supreme Being. The Jain philosophy being without any materialistic bias witnessed, the iconic representation of the Tīrthaṅkaras and their associated *yakshas* and *yakshis*, initially carved on the façade of their natural caverns. The Tīrthaṅkaras are represented seated in the *padmāsana* posture or standing in the *Kāyotsarga* posture without any paraphernalia. Hence, as JyotiPrasad Jain states, ‘the Jains appear to have carried their spirit of acute analysis and asceticism into the sphere of art and architecture’¹³. The *yakshas* and *yakshis* were introduced into the Jaina pantheon mainly by ‘assimilating and transforming different brahmanical legendary characters and deities in Jaina creed’ as are known through their literature and surviving sculptures¹⁴. Some of the unique sculptural styles found from Tondaimandalam include *Chaumukhi* (as at Vallimalai) or representation of the same or either different Tīrthaṅkaras on four sides. A fine masterpiece of Jaina art of the times is seen at Tirunatharkunru where on a single rock face all the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras are carved in two rows of twelve each. These may be an elaboration of the *dvitīrthī* and *tritīrthī* Tīrthaṅkaras images where ^{two} two or three of them are shown together. Along with these were the popularity of mother goddess worship, that the Jains contributed to, though this was necessitated by social compulsions. The finest of the Yakshi representation in Tamil land comes from Panchapandavarmalai where in Ambika *yakshi* is carved in all its artistic beauty and grace. Some of other notable

places to house the repository of Pallava period Jaina art include, Siyyamangalam, Vallimmalai, Tondur, Tyagadurgam to name only a few.

The *bhakti* movement did influence the Jains to a great extent, but the latter never changed the underlying concept of their philosophy and religion. The Tīrthaṅkaras were the supreme beings who were free from any material influence and it is only to the *Sāsanadevatās* that a man could worship for gaining material needs.

Their concept of Ahimsa and respect of all living things is perhaps the single largest contribution by Jainism to the region. The Digambara texts such as the *Pravachanacāra* and *Mūlachāra* are replete with instructions to the monks and Jaina congregation and laity to observe respect for all living beings and to work for the betterment of the society and the lay followers.

Contribution to Education

Another major role of the Jains in the Pallava society is seen with regard to their social and philanthropic activities. Perhaps no other religion had played such a massive role in imparting education to the lay men as has been done by the Jains. The Brahmanical institutions such as the Kanchipuram University catered to the Sanskrit education and imparting Vedic learning to the rich and high in the society. The Jains on other hand imparted philosophy, science, cosmography, grammar, ethics etc to the common people.

Apart from these, the Jains catered to the education of the common people. Particularly women's education received a great impetus at the hands of the Jains. Numerous inscriptions recovered from Tondaimandalam such as Vedal, Kilsattamangalam which refer to *palli*. The *palli* 's are taken to mean a school, of the Jaina or Buddhist order, but it may also stand for a temple or a monastery¹⁵.

They played a vital role as centres of education and housed a large number of monks, nuns and students. The Jaina male teachers were known as *bhaṭāra* and he was also known as *acarya* or great scholar. The lady teachers were known as *Kuratti*. The male students were called *māṇākkar* and the women students were called as *māṇākkiyar*¹⁶. The spread of Jainism into the length and breadth of the Tamil land is attributed to the activities of these nuns and monks. Some of the finest literary productions are the result of these educational institutions.

The early monasteries such as the one that existed at Patalika was a centre from where important works were produced such as the *Lokavibhāga*, on the science of cosmography written in Prakrit and later translated to Sanskrit. These monasteries would not have imparted education only on science and grammar but also on secular themes and fine arts. The ancient Tamil literatures are replete with instances to indicate as to how scholars and monks carried out religious disputations and succeeded in putting forth the Jaina ideals.

The site of Tiruparruttikunram near Kanchipuram, the seat of ancient Jainism also evidences the existence of a Jaina monastery. From the Pallankoil inscription it is known that the place had a Vardhamaesvara Dharmatirtham which is at present identified with Varadhmana temple. Therein existed a Nandi Saṅgha with Vajranandi as its reputed teacher. The Saṅgha especially the Nandi and Dravida played a vital role in imparting Jaina doctrines to the laity. As known from the copperplate, the monastery of Nandi Saṅgha even received large scale *pallichchandam* grants and villages were exclusively demarcated to serve the economic needs of these organisations. Inscriptions recorded from places such as Kalugumalai record the visit by nuns from Tirupparuttikunattikal which are clear indications of the fame and significant role of the Tirpuarruttikunram monastery even as early as the 6th century AD.

There were special institutions for women known as *pen-palli*. A fine instance of a *palli* catering to the education of women and which the nuns of the Digambara order administered comes from Vedal in the present Gingee taluk. Therein a huge natural cavern has been converted into a structure by constructing pillars with corbels. The inscription copied from the site indicates that during the 9th century AD there were about nine-hundred women students who studied at the place. The teacher Kanavirakurritiyar was the student of Gunavirapanditar. This would indicate that women received education, without any distinction, even under male teachers. Education at all stages was free. Female education was also on par with male. Nuns instructed girls. All these would indicate that the Jains as early as the 7th to 8th centuries had thought and acted ahead of their times in providing equal opportunities to the people without any distinction of caste, creed or sect. Moreover, Jaina temples were attached to the monasteries and the chief Bhattaraka would act as a liaison between the recluse and house holder.

Apart from this is the role that the monasteries played in imparting medical help to the lay men. Perhaps no other religious sects had contributed to some much of social and cultural life of the inhabitant as the Jains. In spite of their facing extreme hostility, the Jains nevertheless stood for upholding their social doctrines and ethics. And it is perhaps because of their above activities, that the Jains would be remembered in the history of the land.

FOOTNOTES

1. R.Champakalakshmi, "Jaina literature in Tamil", Rshabh Saurab, Rshabhdev Foundation, (Delhi: Rshabhdev Foundation, 1994), p.198.
2. Champakalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.202.
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4. Muni Sri Harishchandra Jain, *Lokavibhaga*, (Ahmedabad,1982), v. 52-53.
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6. Muni Sri Harishchandra Jain, *op.cit.*, p.16.
7. A.Chakravarti, *Neelakesi*, (Jaipur: Prakrit Bharati Academy, 1936), p.11.
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9. *Ibid.*, p.11.
10. Champakalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.208.
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13. Jyotiprasad Jain, *Jaina Sources of the History of Ancient India (100 BC-AD 900)*, Munshi Ram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi. 1964. p.230.
14. Maruti Nandan Prasad Tiwari, "Brahmanical Deities in Jaina Pantheon and Religious Art: Their Mutuality", *History and Archaeology*. (1992), p.459.
15. S.Gurumurthy, "Jaina system of Learning in South India", *Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures*, (Madras, University of Madras, 1971), p.95.
16. *Ibid.*, p.99.

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sophistication and scientific thinking of the Jains is no where more explicit than in the said manuscript. Moreover, the fact that the manuscript was translated in the Jaina monastery would indicate the role of the *mathas* as an institution for safeguarding Jaina tenets and philosophy.

Another literature of equal significance is the *Neelakesi*, a work on Jaina philosophy. It derives its name after the protagonists of the story, '*Kali-Neelakesi*' of Pazhayanur⁷. The author of the text remains unknown. The text was composed with the intention of refuting the Buddhist work *Kundalakesi*. Chakravarti has placed the upper limit of the age of *Neelakesi* to the 1st century A.D and the lower limit to the 5th century A.D⁸. References from the *Merumandarapuram* indicate that the *Samaya Divākara Virutti* is the commentry on *Neelakesi* and the commentator is identified with Vamanacharya also known as Malli-sena-Charya⁹, a famous Jaina teacher from Jina Kanchi¹⁰. The story of *Neelakesi* is about the search for the true system of philosophy by Neeli and here in the author of *Neelakesi* has adopted the method of dialogue for philosophical discussion.

The purpose of the treatise was to propagate the Jaina tenets and to indicate the triumph of Jaina philosophy over all other systems. Apart from the Jain philosophy that the literature emanates, they also impart scientific ideas such as the plants are living organisms and are mentioned as *Ēkēndria Jiva*. Along with these is the emphasis on the doctrine of *ahimsā*. Thus, it is noted here that through the medium of literature, the Jains succeeded in putting forth their religious dogmas and philosophies to the lay followers. The emphasis on the science of cosmography in the *Lokavibhāga* and information about the life systems of plants and animals, aided in presenting a scientific understanding of the world around them by the Jains and this was a new technique of presenting itself to the people.

The active participation of the Jains in the literary field, is effected for a brief period by the impact of the *bhakti* movement and its domination by the Alvar and Nayanmar saints, particularly during the 7th to 9th century AD. Their philosophical writings couldn't make much progress and impact on the people against the musical, devotional and bardic style of poetry by the *nayanmar* and the *alvars*. The two latter groups wrote and propagated about the lively god - the legends, stories, their playful activities and the instant support that they extended to the devotees in distress. All these raised them to the forefront, thus in the process sidelining Jainism. But this lasted only till about the 9th century AD when once again, as has been noted earlier, aided by many factors there was resurrection of Jainism. This resulted in literary production on a much larger scale and these apart from influencing the common people, posed a challenge to other religious sects to produce works to match the domination by the Jain scholars.

5.2 The political impact of Jainism

For much longer time, that the Jains had been on the cultural scene of the region, their impact was felt on the political institutions as well. Scholars such as Hart and Kailasapathy, based on the moralising concept of the early Tamil poetry and on the basis of references to such Jain practices such as the *Vatakkiruttal* or death by starvation has indicated the Jain influence on the political authority of the region. It is generally held by most historians that the impact of Jainism considerably reduces after the Kalabhra interregnum particularly on the political field. But the evidences produced by literatures and other archaeological evidences suggest that the Pallava rulers inspite of their adherence to brahmanical sects extended support to the Jains. This is seen from the time of Simhavarman III.

The Pallankoil copper plate inscription, dated to his reign, would suggest the influential role of the Jains, in those times, in and around Kanchipuram that merited the King in donating large scale *pallichchandam* grant to the temple of Varadhamaneesvara (the earliest Jain temple in Kanchipuram, dating to the 6th century AD). The grant of land would indicate the emergence of Jaina institutions as land holders thus to a great extent controlling and influencing the economic and political power of the area concerned. The king by his generous donation, acknowledged the influential role of the Jaina monasteries. The king on the other hand received political recognition from these religious institution which in those times was very necessary for his stability. Through the concept of *dana*, the political authority gained instant recognition and also succeeded in winning over the confidence of an influential group.

After Simhavarman III, the reign of Mahendravarman I perhaps witnessed the greatest influence of Jainism. As discussed at length in the earlier chapters, this period marks the turning point in the social-religious history of the Tamil land. Scholars have generally taken into account the *Periyapuranam* to suggest the Jain adherence of King Mahendravarman I. Avoiding the repetition of the arguments against the set point, the researcher would confine to the impact of Jainism on the political authority of the time. It is well known that Jainism had played a vital role in Tamil land since the 3rd century BC and Mahendravarman I was from his birth, inspite of his brahmanical background, exposed to Jainism because of his grandmother, a Jain from the Ganga territory.

The Ganga princess who was the wife of Simhavarman III because of her Jaina adherence had played a vital role in forging a close political alliance between the Pallavas-the brahmanical followers, and the Gangas of Karnataka-mainly Jain adherents. She had even succeeded in granting land in Karnataka to

the monks of *Yapaniya Sangha*¹¹. Thus, it could be inferred that Mahendravarman I could have since his childhood been exposed to various faiths operating at the time. Being a versatile writer, he composed such magnificent works as the *Mattavilasaprahasana* and the *Bhagavadajjukka*. Though both are farcical plays, they are replete with inferences that would suggest a strong influence of Jaina morality and way of life. Some of which are in the doctrine of *Karma*, the concept of renunciation, the mode of asceticism and the food habits. These would suggest that inspite of the Brahmanical majority, the Jains by their harshness of asceticism coupled with simplicity of their lifestyle and morality had become an enduring force in the land so much as to leave its profound influence on the political authority of the region concerned. After Mahendravarman I, this sort of a political influence is felt in the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

A significant development during the reign of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla is the transformation of the conception of the Pallava kingship from the early monolithic royal dominance to one in which there was sharing of political sovereignty between powerfully locally based persons¹². He is perhaps the only ruler during whose time numerous donations were made to the Jaina institutions throughout the length and breadth of Tondaimandalam. This was a deliberate act on the part of the ruler, because of the political compulsions to be seen as a *bhakta* of all faiths and here particularly Jainism. This because he needed the political support of the rulers from Karnataka and the Muttarayairs all of who had a considerable amount of Jaina population. More than religious, this was a deliberate incorporational tactic of the King in winning over religious support to his political interests. All of the above evidences would suggest the strong political role that the Jains enjoyed even in the most troubled of its times that threatened its very survival.

5.3 The Social influence

The Jains had a great impact on the social life of the people. Ever since their inception on the geographical horizon of Tondaimandalam, the Jains had been noted for their consequential influence on the psychology and social life of its inhabitants. Almost all their literatures are replete with the doctrine of *ahimsa*, a concept in which perhaps no other faith could match the Jains. They preached total respect for all living things whether plants, animals or even the smallest of the insects. The Digambaras tradition forbids their monks from travelling during the rainy season mainly to prevent them from committing any sin such as destroying or tampering small insects or plant life. Hence their cave abodes are referred to as rainy retreats. They even laid down rules for alms taking by the monks, such as they should ensure that they beg for only left over food lest the inhabitants go without food and that they should beg only for a handful of food.

A distinct practice of Jains that is nowhere advocated in any other religion is their concept of *Sallekhanā*. *Sallekhanā* is death by starvation when the monks or lay adherents realise that they are no longer able to carry out their worldly activities as prescribed by the Jains tenants and holy texts. In this the person concerned is to slowly mortify his body by abstaining from food and water.

Along with this were their strict monastic practices. To gain mental control and to prepare a person for any sort of adversary, and to instill a sense of non-materialism, the Jains prescribed harsh practices such as pulling out one's hair with his or her own hands, should stand and eat food, should sleep on harsh grounds. All this left a profound influence on the non-materialistic attitude of the society during the period.

This simplicity of their social life was felt on their art and architecture also. Iconography is often, at one and the same time, the artistic expression of religious fervour, as well as a search for the metaphysical ultimate. The iconic expression of the metaphysical ultimate generally personifies in concrete form, the dogmas and tenets of the various schools of philosophy. Hence, they were used as discourses to appear in the visible stone medium. The iconic representations were formulated on the basic tenets of the school to enable the lay devotees to establish an immediate personal rapport with the Supreme Being. The Jain philosophy being without any materialistic bias witnessed, the iconic representation of the Tīrthaṅkaras and their associated *yakshas* and *yakshis*, initially carved on the façade of their natural caverns. The Tīrthaṅkaras are represented seated in the *padmāsana* posture or standing in the *Kāyotsarga* posture without any paraphernalia. Hence, as JyotiPrasad Jain states, ‘the Jains appear to have carried their spirit of acute analysis and asceticism into the sphere of art and architecture’¹³. The *yakshas* and *yakshis* were introduced into the Jaina pantheon mainly by ‘assimilating and transforming different brahmanical legendary characters and deities in Jaina creed’ as are known through their literature and surviving sculptures¹⁴. Some of the unique sculptural styles found from Tondaimandalam include *Chaumukhi* (as at Vallimalai) or representation of the same or either different Tīrthaṅkaras on four sides. A fine masterpiece of Jaina art of the times is seen at Tirunatharkunru where on a single rock face all the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras are carved in two rows of twelve each. These may be an elaboration of the *dvitīrthī* and *tritīrthī* Tīrthaṅkaras images where ^{two} two or three of them are shown together. Along with these were the popularity of mother goddess worship, that the Jains contributed to, though this was necessitated by social compulsions. The finest of the Yakshi representation in Tamil land comes from Panchapandavarmalai where in Ambika *yakshi* is carved in all its artistic beauty and grace. Some of other notable

places to house the repository of Pallava period Jaina art include, Siyyamangalam, Vallimmalai, Tondur, Tyagadurgam to name only a few.

The *bhakti* movement did influence the Jains to a great extent, but the latter never changed the underlying concept of their philosophy and religion. The Tīrthaṅkaras were the supreme beings who were free from any material influence and it is only to the *Sāsanadevatās* that a man could worship for gaining material needs.

Their concept of Ahimsa and respect of all living things is perhaps the single largest contribution by Jainism to the region. The Digambara texts such as the *Pravachanacāra* and *Mūlachāra* are replete with instructions to the monks and Jaina congregation and laity to observe respect for all living beings and to work for the betterment of the society and the lay followers.

Contribution to Education

Another major role of the Jains in the Pallava society is seen with regard to their social and philanthropic activities. Perhaps no other religion had played such a massive role in imparting education to the lay men as has been done by the Jains. The Brahmanical institutions such as the Kanchipuram University catered to the Sanskrit education and imparting Vedic learning to the rich and high in the society. The Jains on other hand imparted philosophy, science, cosmography, grammar, ethics etc to the common people.

Apart from these, the Jains catered to the education of the common people. Particularly women's education received a great impetus at the hands of the Jains. Numerous inscriptions recovered from Tondaimandalam such as Vedal, Kilsattamangalam which refer to *palli*. The *palli* 's are taken to mean a school, of the Jaina or Buddhist order, but it may also stand for a temple or a monastery¹⁵.

They played a vital role as centres of education and housed a large number of monks, nuns and students. The Jaina male teachers were known as *bhaṭāra* and he was also known as *acarya* or great scholar. The lady teachers were known as *Kuratti*. The male students were called *māṇākkar* and the women students were called as *māṇākkīyar*¹⁶. The spread of Jainism into the length and breadth of the Tamil land is attributed to the activities of these nuns and monks. Some of the finest literary productions are the result of these educational institutions.

The early monasteries such as the one that existed at Patalika was a centre from where important works were produced such as the *Lokavibhāga*, on the science of cosmography written in Prakrit and later translated to Sanskrit. These monasteries would not have imparted education only on science and grammar but also on secular themes and fine arts. The ancient Tamil literatures are replete with instances to indicate as to how scholars and monks carried out religious disputations and succeeded in putting forth the Jaina ideals.

The site of Tiruparruttikunram near Kanchipuram, the seat of ancient Jainism also evidences the existence of a Jaina monastery. From the Pallankoil inscription it is known that the place had a Vardhamaesvara Dharmatirtham which is at present identified with Varadhmana temple. Therein existed a Nandi Saṅgha with Vajranandi as its reputed teacher. The Saṅgha especially the Nandi and Dravida played a vital role in imparting Jaina doctrines to the laity. As known from the copperplate, the monastery of Nandi Saṅgha even received large scale *pallichchandam* grants and villages were exclusively demarcated to serve the economic needs of these organisations. Inscriptions recorded from places such as Kalugumalai record the visit by nuns from Tirupparuttikunattikal which are clear indications of the fame and significant role of the Tirpuarruttikunram monastery even as early as the 6th century AD.

There were special institutions for women known as *pen-palli*. A fine instance of a *palli* catering to the education of women and which the nuns of the Digambara order administered comes from Vedal in the present Gingee taluk. Therein a huge natural cavern has been converted into a structure by constructing pillars with corbels. The inscription copied from the site indicates that during the 9th century AD there were about nine-hundred women students who studied at the place. The teacher Kanavirakurritiyar was the student of Gunavirapanditar. This would indicate that women received education, without any distinction, even under male teachers. Education at all stages was free. Female education was also on par with male. Nuns instructed girls. All these would indicate that the Jains as early as the 7th to 8th centuries had thought and acted ahead of their times in providing equal opportunities to the people without any distinction of caste, creed or sect. Moreover, Jaina temples were attached to the monasteries and the chief Bhattaraka would act as a liaison between the recluse and house holder.

Apart from this is the role that the monasteries played in imparting medical help to the lay men. Perhaps no other religious sects had contributed to some much of social and cultural life of the inhabitant as the Jains. In spite of their facing extreme hostility, the Jains nevertheless stood for upholding their social doctrines and ethics. And it is perhaps because of their above activities, that the Jains would be remembered in the history of the land.

FOOTNOTES

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3. D.G.Mahajan, "Forgotten land of Jain heritage, Pataliputra-the Ancient Tirupadiripuliyur in Dravid Desh", p. 179.
4. Muni Sri Harishchandra Jain, *Lokavibhaga*, (Ahmedabad,1982), v. 52-53.
5. R.Narasimhachari, "Lokavibhaga", (*Mysore, Report of the Archeological survey of Mysore*, 1908-1911), p.45.
6. Muni Sri Harishchandra Jain, *op.cit.*, p.16.
7. A.Chakravarti, *Neelakesi*, (Jaipur: Prakrit Bharati Academy, 1936), p.11.
8. *Ibid.*, pp.6-8.
9. *Ibid.*, p.11.
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APPENDIX

THE TIRUCHIRAPALLI INSCRIPTION OF MAHENDRAVARMAN I

The famous inscription of Pallava king Mahendravarman I is engraved near the Siva–Gangadhara panel, within the cave temple at Rock Fort, Tiruchi.

TEXT

(Beginning on the northern pilaster :)

1. Śail-ēndra mūrdhdhani śīla bhavanē vicitrē
2. Śailin-tanuṃ Gunabharō nṛpatir-nnidhāya [1*]
3. Sthānum vyadhata Vidhir = ēsa yathārtha samjñam
4. sthānuḥ svayaṅ = ca saha tēnaṅ-jagatsu jātaḥ [11*]
5. Gṛham = akṛta Śatrumallō girīndra kanyā
6. patēr = ggirāv = asmiṃ [1*] giri*śāsya giriśa
7. samjñam = anvarthikartum = artthapatih 11 [2*]
8. Vibhū*tiṅ = cōlanām katham = aham = avēkṣē
9. ya vipulām nadīm vā Kāvīrīm = avani-bhavan = āva-
10. sthita iti [1*] Harēn = ōktah prītyā vibhur = adīśa-
11. d = abhramliham = idam = Manu-prakhyō [rājyē giri] – bhavana-
12. m = asmai Gunabharah 11 [3*] Nirmmapitām = iti mudā
13. Puruṣōttamēna śailim Harasya tanuṃ = aprati-
14. mām = anēna [1*] kṛtvā śivam śīrasi dhārayat = ātma-
15. samstham = uccaiḥ śīrastvam = acalasya kṛtam kṛta-
16. rttham 11 [4*]

(Continuing on the southern pilaster :)

1. Kavīrīn = nayan = ābhirāma salilām = ārā-
2. ma-mālā-dharām dēvō vīksya nadī-priyah
3. priya guṇam = apy = ēsa rajyēd = iti [1*] sāsām
4. ka Girikanyakā pitṛ-kulam hitv = ēha manyē gi-
5. rau nityan = tiṣṭhati Pallavasya dayitām = ētām bru-
6. vānā nadīm 11 [5*] Guṇabhara-nāmani rājany = anēna li-
7. ngēna līngini jñānam [1*] prathatañ = cirāya lōkē vi-
8. pakṣa-vṛtteḥ parāvṛttam 11 [6*] Cōla-viṣayasya śailō-
9. maulir = ivāyam mahā-mañir = ivāsyā [1*] Hara-grham = ēta-
10. j = jyōtis = tadīyam = iva Sām̐karam̐ jyōtiḥ 11 [7*] Silāksarē-
11. ṇa janitā Satyasandhasya bhautiki [1*] mūrttiḥ kirttima-
12. yīn̐ = cāsyā kṛta tēn = aiva śāsvatī 11 [8*] Niṣkṛsy = acalāsa-
13. madhāyi Gunabhare bhaktiḥ [parā]

TRANSLATION

(Beginning on the northern pilaster :)

- (V.1) When king Gunabhara (Mahendra) carved a stone figure (*Gangadhara*) in the wonderful stone temple on top of the most splendid of mountains, this king, entitled *Vidhi* (the Creator), made *Sthanu* (*Siva*) true to its meaning (stationary), and became himself *sthanu* (fixed, immortal) together with him (*Siva*) before the eyes of the world.
- (V.2) The lord of this earthly realm, Satrumalla (Mahendra), made on this mountain a temple for the ‘ Lord of Mountains’ (*Siva*), the husband of (*Ganga*) the ‘Daughter of the King of Mountains’, in order to make the name ‘*Girisa*’ true to its meaning.

- (V.3) When Hara (*Siva*) affectionately asked him : 'How could I, while remaining in a temple on earth, see the great land of the Cholas or the river Kaveri?', king Gunabhara, whose empire rivals the empire of Manu, assigned to him (*Siva*) this mountain-temple which kisses the clouds.
- (V.4) Having joyfully made this figure of Hara which has no equal, and having made it on *top* of the mountain, this Purusottama (Mahendra), who (like the mountain) bore 'on his head' (that is, incarnate in his features and in his mind) God immanent, thus made the mountain worthy of its loftiness.

(Continuing on the southern pilaster :)

- (V.5) Being afraid that the God who is fond of rivers (*Siva*), having seen the Kaveri, whose waters please the eye, who wears a garland of gardens, and who possesses lovely qualities, might fall in love with her (also), the Daughter of the Mountain (*Ganga*) has left her father's family to reside, I reckon, permanently on this mountain, calling this river (Kaveri) the beloved (wife) of the Pallava (king).
- (V.6) As the king called Gunabhara has (assumed in this manner) the form (of *Siva*), let this form (the figure of *Gangadhara*, together with its great fame) turn back the faith (of people) from the surrounding enemy camp (and) forever manifest it (in its true form of Saivism) throughout the world.
- (V.7) This mountain is, as it were, the diadem of the Chola province, this temple of Hara its chief jewel, and the splendour of Sankara (*Siva*) its splendour.
- (V.8) (This) stone inscription (in the sense that it represents the inspiration of the poet) has given birth, as it were, to a physical body (i.e., the *Gangadhara* image) of Satyasandha, and has (thus) produced an eternal embodiment of his glory.

By excavating (this) mountain (temple), Gunabhara's surpassing devotion was (thus) given permanent expression.

Michael Lockwood and A. Vishnu Bhat, Mamallapuram and the Pallavas, Madras: Christian Literary Society. 1992.

MATTAVILĀSAPRAHASANA

The *Mattavilāsaprahasana* is the world's oldest farcical play authored by the Pallava ruler Mahendravarman I (600-630). The play centres around a Kapalika couple and their search for the lost skull (begging) bowl. In course of the play, the author introduces the reader to the practices and doctrines of many a sect that were existing at Kanchipuram such as the Kāpālikas, the Paśupatas, the Jains and the Buddhist and through the medium of the play mounts a sarcastic attack on the moral degeneration that had crept into those sects.

The characters of the play are:

SŪTRADHĀRĀ (Stage Manager): Person responsible for the production.

NĀTĪ (Stage Manager's wife): Assistant in production.

KAPĀLĪ: An unorthodox Śaivite mendicant, carrying a skull-bowl for begging,
whose personal name is Satyasoma.

DĒVASŌMĀ: Satyasoma's female partner.

Buddhist Monk (ŚĀKYABHIKṢU) – whose name is Nagasena.

PĀŚUPATA - a member of another unorthodox Śaivite order: his name is
Babhrukalpa.

For the purpose of the research, the passage where reference is made about the Jains is very significant. The reference in the course of discussion between Kapālī and Dēvasōmā regarding the path towards salvation.

36. KAPĀLĪ : (Overjoyed, he raises her up and embraces her) Bravo! Bravo!

Glory be to Śiva! Dearest:

May the trident-armed Śiva

Forever reign!

Who the way of salvation

did thus ordain:

Liquor drink,
beloved's face admire,
Unselfconsciously wear
Outlandish attire!

(7)

37. DĒVASŌMĀ: Bhagavan! Don't speak out like that !
Jain saints describe the way to salvation differently.

38. KAPĀLĪ : Dear ! They are heretics ! For:
Having established by logical reason
That cause and effect are in form the same,
Those wretches are crushed by the treason
Of their doctrine that happiness is caused by pain ! (8)

39. DĒVASŌMĀ: Forbid ! Forbid such sin!

40. KAPĀLĪ : Forbid! Forbid such sin! Those wicked wretches don't
deserve to be spoken of even in reproach, for they torture
the life out of creatures by prescribing celibacy, plucking
out the hair, going unwashed, restricting the time of eating,
wearing filthy robes, and so on. Therefore I must have
liquor to wash my tongue defiled by the glorification of
heretics!

41. DĒVASŌMĀ: Then let's go to another liquor shop now!

42. KAPĀLĪ : All right, dear.

(They walk around)

The play continues.

The above translation is taken from Michael Lockwood and A.Vishnu
Bhat, edited and translated- Mattavilāsa-Prahasana (THE FARCE OF THE
DRUNKEN SPORT) by KING MAHENDRAVIKRAMAVARMA PALLAVA (Madras: Published by Christian Literature Society, 1981).

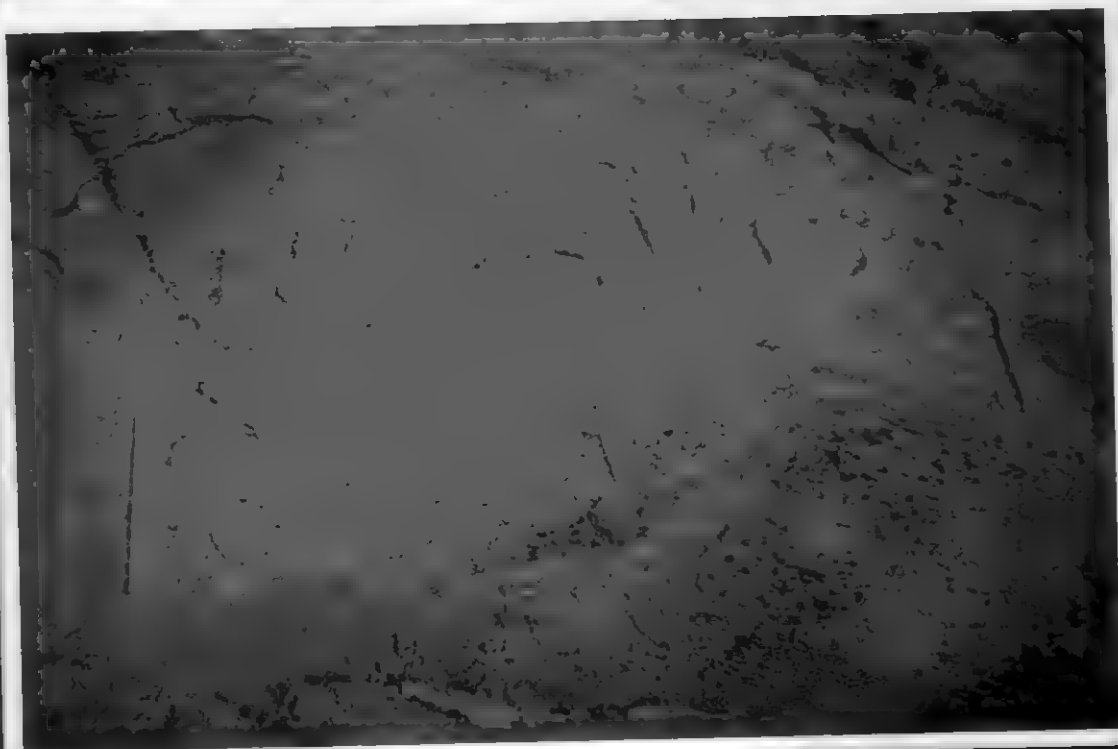


PLATE I
INSCRIPTION – PARAYANPATTU



PLATE II
SATRUMALLESVARALAYA ROCK CUT TEMPLE – DALAVANUR

PLATE III A
PARSVANATHA - TONDUR

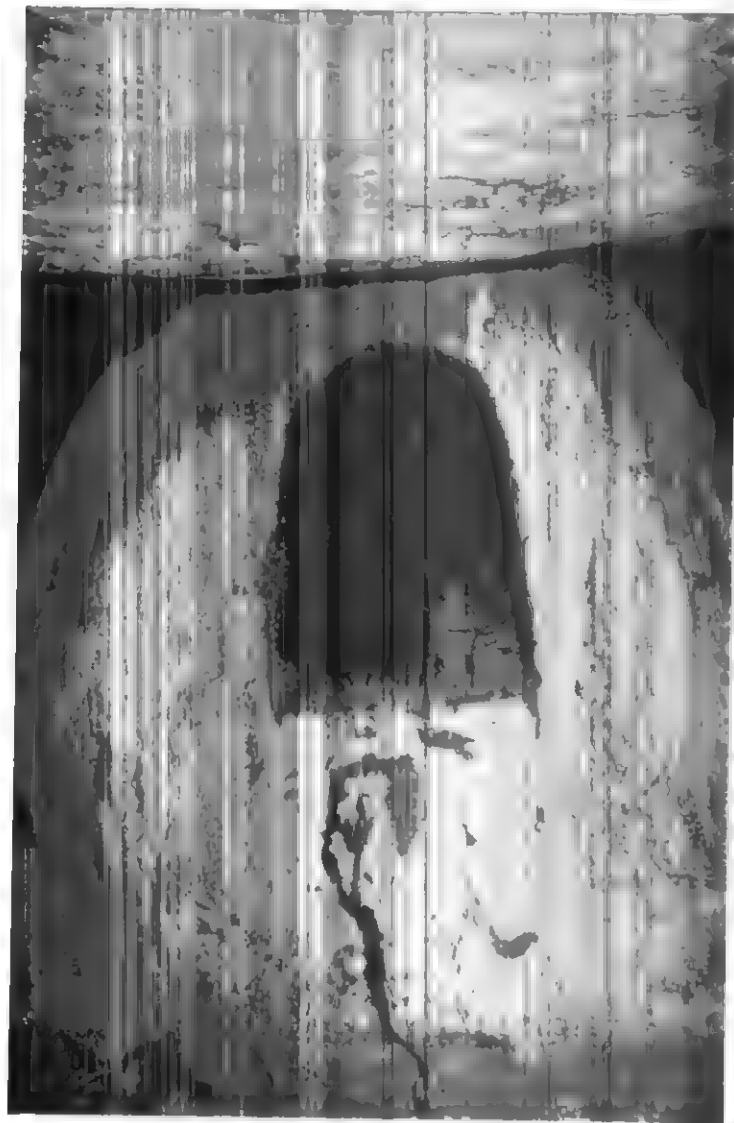


PLATE III B
VISHNU - TONDUR



PLATE IV A
STONE BED – URANITHANGAL

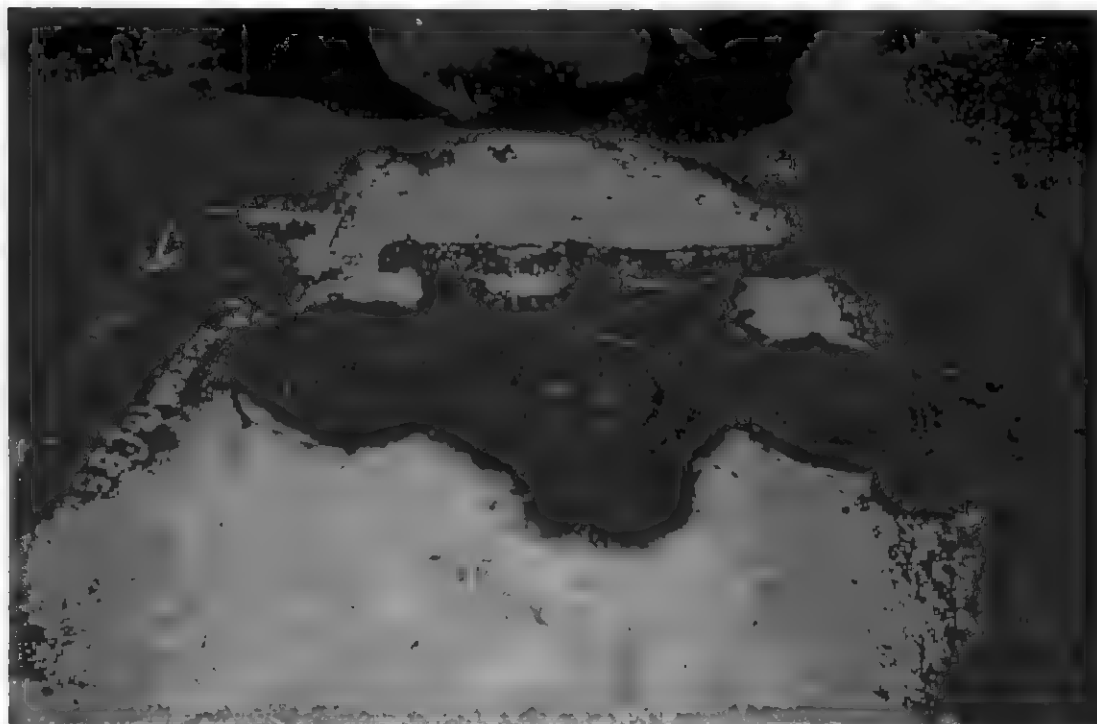


PLATE IV B
JAINA PADA – URANITHANGAL



PLATE V A
VARADHAMANA TEMPLE – TIRUPARRUTTIKUNRAM



PLATE V B
MANASTHAMBA – TIRUPARRUTTIKUNRAM



PLATE V C
CHANDRAPRABHA TEMPLE – TIRUPPARUTTIKUNRAM



PLATE VI
TIRTHANKARA – PETTAI



PLATE VII A
VIRATANISWARA TEMPLE – TIRUVADIGAI



PLATE VII B
APPAR SANNIDHI – TIRUVADIGA



PLATE VII C
BUDDHA SCULPTURE – TIRUVADIGAI



PLATE VIII
SIVA TEMPLE – GUNADHAREECHURAM

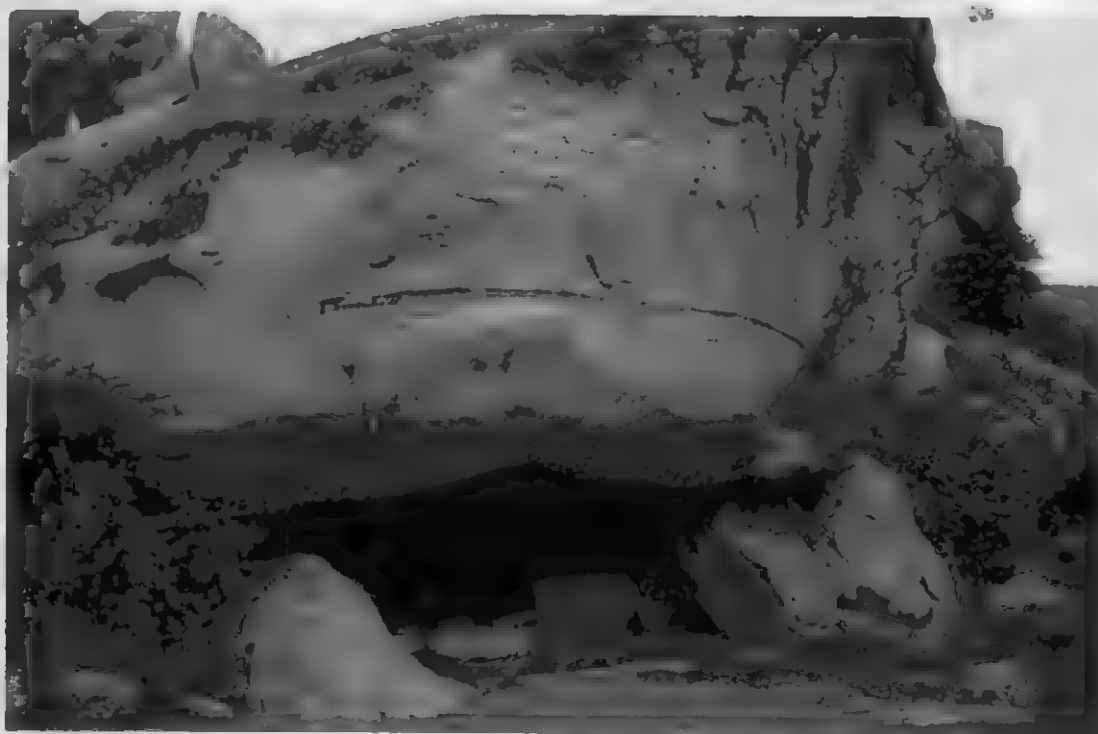


PLATE IX A
JAINA SCULPTURES – SIYYAMANGALAM



PLATE IX B
AVINABHAJANA PALLAVESVARA GRIHA – SIYYAMANGALAM

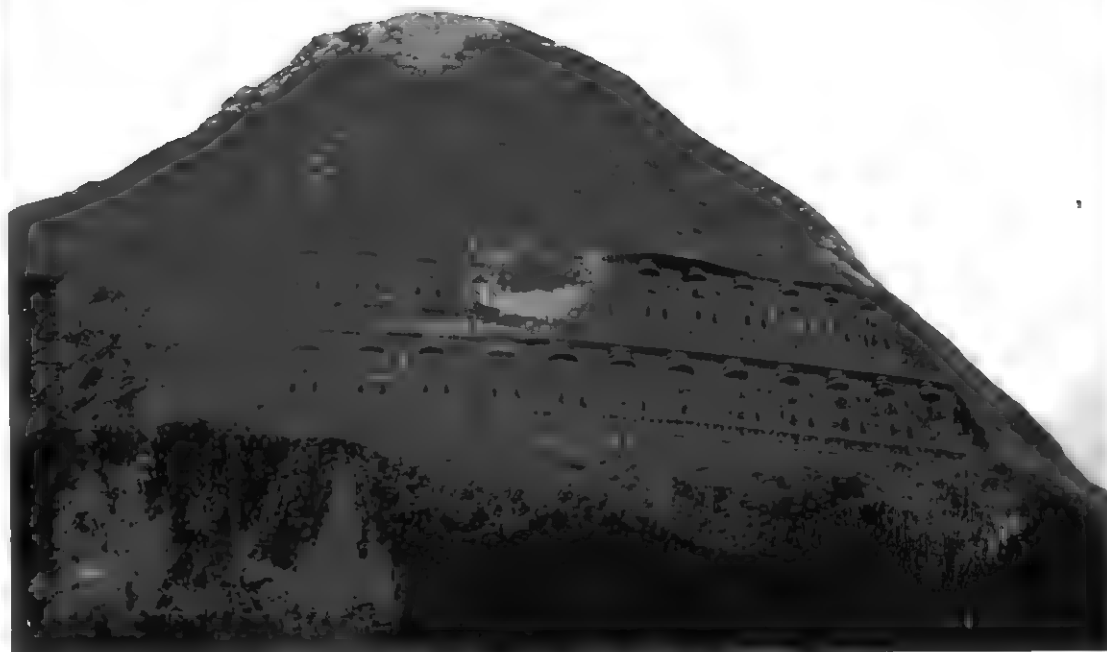


PLATE X
SIRUKADAMBUR – TIRUNATHARKUNRU

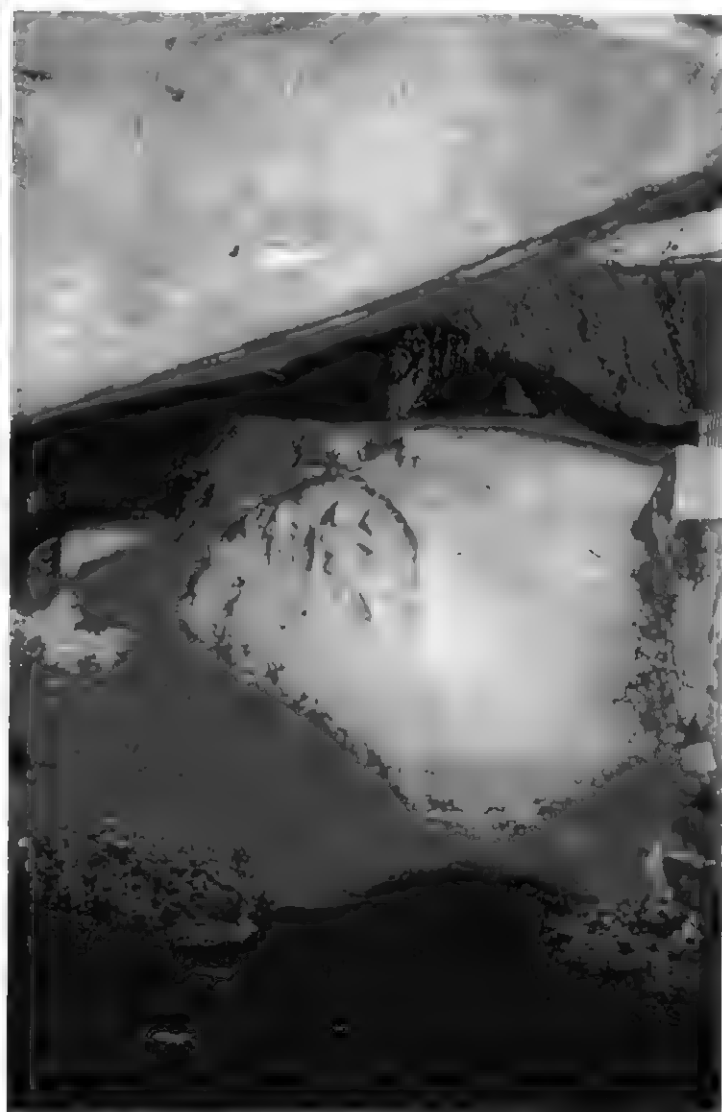


PLATE XI A
AMBIKA YAKSHI – PANCHAPANDAVARMALAI

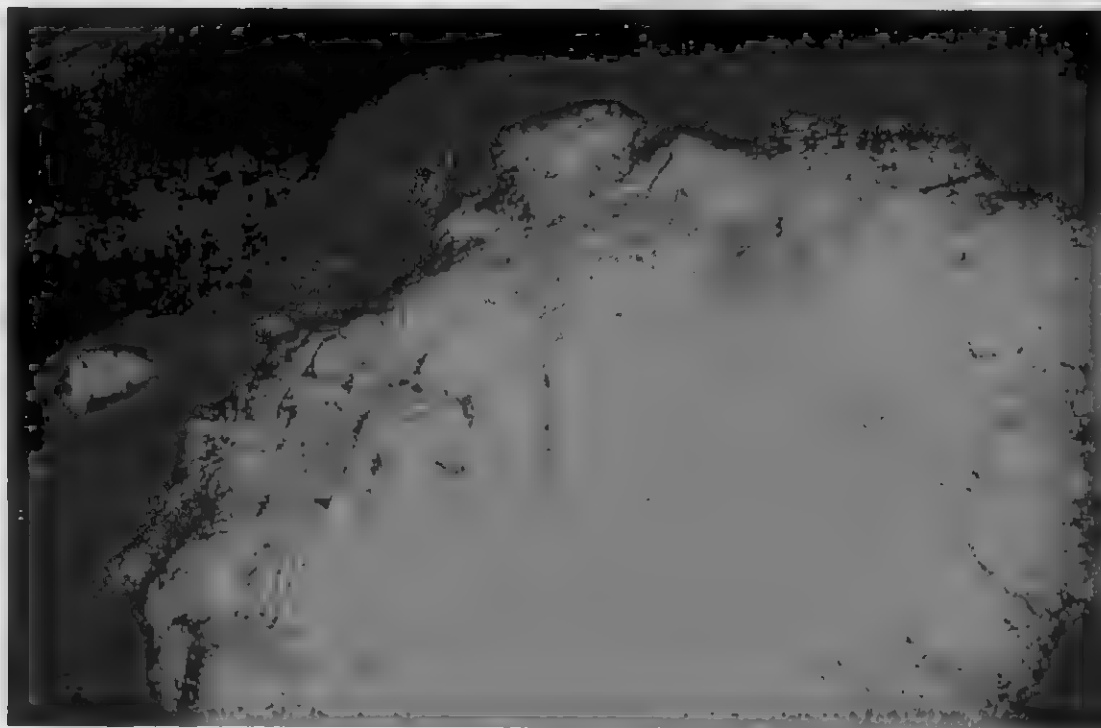


PLATE XI A(i)
AMBIKA YAKSHI – PANCHAPANDAVARMALAI



PLATE XI B
ROCK CUT TEMPLE – PANCHAPANDAVARMALAI



PLATE XII
KILSATTAMANGALAM



PLATE XIII
PENPALI - VEDAL



PLATE XIV A
RSABHANATHA TEMPLE – PERUMANDUR



PLATE XIV B
RSABHANATHA SHRINE – PERUMANDUR



PLATE XIV C
CEILING PAINTINGS – PERUMANDUR



PLATE XIV D
CHANDRAPRABHA TEMPLE – PERUMANDUR



PLATE XIV E
ENTRANCE - CHANDRAPRABHA TEMPLE - PERUMANDUR



PLATE XV
INSCRIPTION - KIRAIPAKKAM



PLATE XVI
TIRTHANKARA – VENKUNRAM



PLATE XVII A
NORTHERN GROUP – TIRTHANKARA SCULPTURES – VALLIMALAI

PLATE XVII B
SRUTADEVI - VALLIMALAI



PLATE XVII C
JAINA DIVINITIES - VALLIMALAI



PLATE XVIII
CHINNAPALAPAKKAM



PLATE XIX A
GENERAL VIEW - KARUPPANKUNRU

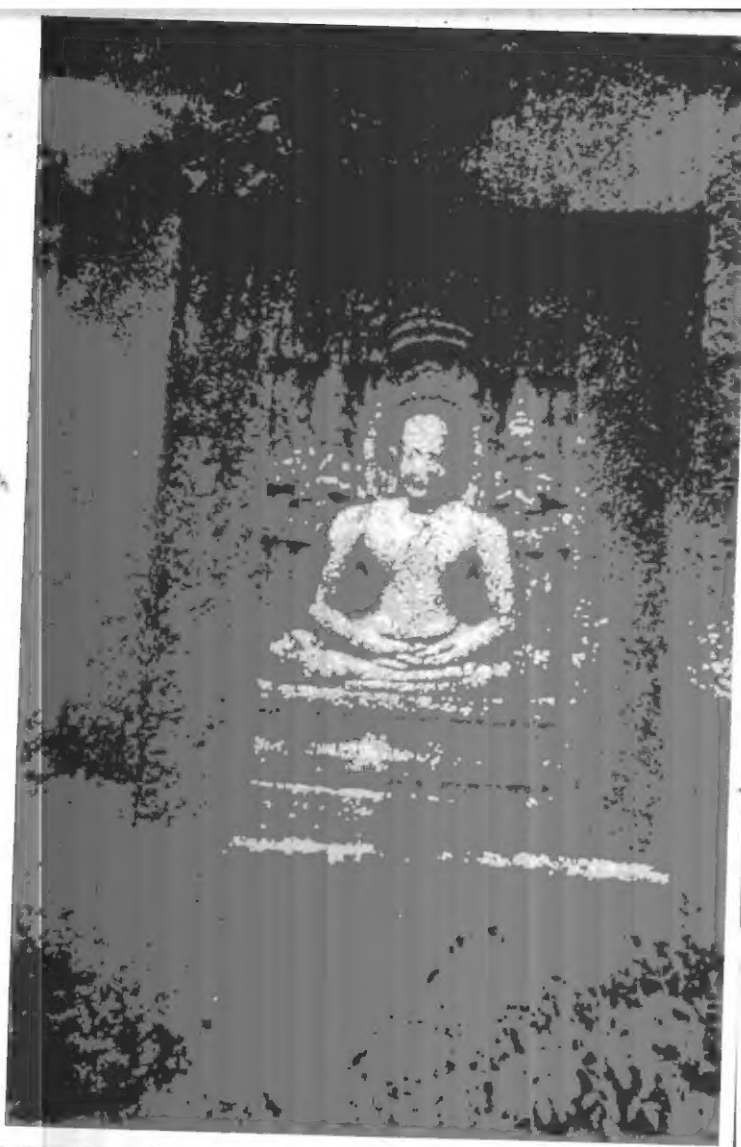


PLATE XIX B
TIRTHANKARA - KARUPANKUNRU



PLATE XIX C
ROCK CUT SHRINE - KARUPANKUNRU